NATION

Active Covid cases in India cross 6,000-mark

≫ Page: 4 ≪

BUSINESS

Five telcoms in race for DRCA status, says TRAI

≫ Page: 7 ≪

SPORTS

Marc Marquez wins Aragon Grand Prix

≫ Page: 8 ≪

www.twitter.com/EnglishSalar
www.facebook.com/EnglishSalar
www.instagram.com/dailysalarenglish
youtube.com/@dailysalardigital

SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

ساڈھ روزنامہ بنگلور

Website: salarnews.in | www.magzter.com | 9 JUNE 2025 | MONDAY | BENGALURU | 12 DHU AL-HIJJAH, 1446 AH | Vol 4 | Issue No 155 | Pages: 8

PHOTO: X

Mahendra Dev becomes chairman of EAC-PM

NEW DELHI, 8 JUNE

S Mahendra Dev has officially taken office as the new Chairman of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM). The former vice chancellor of the Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research succeeds Suman Bery, who had been serving in the role temporarily. The EAC-PM had been without a full-time chairman since the passing of its inaugural chairman, Bibek Debroy, last November. The Prime Minister has approved the reconstitution of the Council for a two-year term. Alongside Mahendra Dev, full-time members Sanjeev Sanyal, Sanjay Kumar Mishra, and Shamika Ravi will continue. New part-time members include Soumya Kanti Ghosh, Rakesh Mohan, and Nilesh Shah among others. Dev, an eminent economist, holds a PhD from the Delhi School of Economics and has authored 22 books and approximately 150 research publications focusing on development economics and macroeconomic policies. *—PTI*

Major relief for Infosys as GST proceedings closed

NEW DELHI, 8 JUNE

In a significant development for Infosys, the Director General of GST Intelligence (DGGI) has officially closed pre-show cause notice proceedings concerning the company's GST dues, which had amassed to an alarming Rs 32,403 crore for the financial years 2018-19 to 2021-22. This resolution marks the end of a nearly year-long saga for India's second-largest IT services firm. Last year, the GST authorities had issued a formidable notice against Infosys regarding services availed from its overseas branches, retroactively spanning five years beginning in 2017. The amount demanded was particularly striking, surpassing the company's annual profits; for the fiscal year 2025, Infosys reported a net profit of Rs 26,713 crore. In a filing to the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE), Infosys said that it received communication from the DGGI closing the pre-show cause notice proceedings. The firm noted that it had responded to a pre-show cause notice for the period from July 2017 to March 2022 related to the non-payment of Integrated Goods and Services Tax (IGST) under the Reverse Charge Mechanism. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 7

Sharp decline in India's extreme poverty rate as WB changes norms

PHOTO: FREEPIK/AI

NEW DELHI, 8 JUNE

A recent report from the World Bank has revealed a significant decline in India's extreme poverty rate, which has fallen from 27.1 per cent in 2011-12 to just 5.3 per cent in 2022-23. This considerable reduction occurs alongside the World Bank's revision of its International Poverty Line (IPL) to USD 3 per day, a mark that takes into account inflation during the years 2017 to 2021.

The updated threshold means that, in 2022-23, approximately 7.5 crore people were living below the newly established poverty line, a dramatic decrease from 34 crore in 2011-12. The World Bank's report indicates that while this adjustment raised the global count of extreme poverty by 125 million, India has emerged as a notable exception. Through enhanced data collection techniques and more refined survey methods, India has been able to demonstrate a considerable reduction in poverty levels, effectively countering the impact of the raised threshold.

According to the World Bank, around 54.7 million people were living on less than USD 3 per day in 2024, resulting in a poverty rate of 5.44 per cent. The extreme poverty rate saw a significant decline from 16.2 per cent to 2.3 per cent between 2011-12 and 2022-23, and the overall poverty rate for lower-middle-income countries in India dropped by 33.7 percentage points.

The report attributes this decline in poverty largely to effective government policies, including free and subsidised food transfers, which have played a crucial role in alleviating poverty, particularly in rural areas. It noted that the gap between rural and urban poverty narrowed, with the most populous states accounting for 54 per cent of those living in extreme poverty.

The report warns of significant downside risks, including ongoing elevated trade tensions that may negatively impact India's export demand and investment recovery.

Over the decade from 2011-12 to 2022-23, the World Bank estimates that India has lifted 171 million individuals out of extreme poverty, marking a significant milestone towards poverty reduction in the country. *—PTI*

BJP DEMANDS JUDICIAL INQUIRY INTO STAMPEDE

Seeks a special Assembly session to discuss the issue

BENGALURU, 8 JUNE

BJP leader CT Ravi flayed the State government over the stampede tragedy outside Chinnaswamy Stadium during RCB's IPL victory celebrations, which claimed 11 lives and demanded an independent judicial enquiry under the High Court Chief Justice to investigate the circumstances leading to the tragedy.

Ravi held Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar directly responsible for the tragedy, saying that "such an event could only have been organised with their permission".

Ravi also criticised the government's compensation and demanded that the team has earned crores but has not announced any compensation to the victims' families. "The Rs 25 lakh compensation they announced is not from their own money but the government's treasury. RCB has earned crores and yet has not announced any compensation."

"Despite the police advising against it, under whose pressure was permission given to hold this event at the Chinnaswamy Stadium? Should that person not be investigated?" he demanded.

"The Chief Minister and the Deputy Chief Minister should resign, he said.

BJP leader R Ashoka said a special session would shed light on who was responsible for the Chinnaswamy stampede

PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

Similarly, Leader of Opposition in State Assembly R Ashoka demanded that the Congress calls a special session of the State Legislature for three days.

"Let there be a discussion as to who was at fault, all the violations or flouting of laws need to be discussed, whether it was by police permission, DAPR, all of this should be discussed," Ashoka said.

Speaking to reporters here, he said, let there also be discussion regarding providing compensation and all about the three inquiries that have been ordered – magisterial enquiry (to be done by Deputy Commissioner), CID probe, and one-man inquiry commission under retired High Court judge John Michael D'Cunha.

"We had sought for an inquiry headed by a sitting judge of the High Court, we will continue to demand for it," Ashoka said. *—Agencies*

>>>>More on Page 2

Several arrested as protests erupt in Manipur

IMPHAL, 8 JUNE

Central intelligence agencies arrested several people for their alleged role in orchestrating the violence in Manipur last year.

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) arrested three insurgents in a case related to a deadly attack on security forces that killed two police commandos and injured several others in Manipur last year, officials said on Sunday.

The three men, along with their associates, planned, conspired and executed the attack on an Indian Reserve Battalion (IRB) post and security forces at Moreh in Tengnoupal district on 17 January, 2024, they said.

Among the arrested accused is Thangminlen Mate, a resident of Tengnoupal district and member of the Kuki Inpi Tengnoupal (KIT) insurgent group, an official statement said.

He played a key role in orchestrating and carrying out the attack, it said.

The other accused, Kamginthang Gangte, a member of the Kuki National Army (KNA), and Hentinthang Kipgen alias Thangneo Kipgen, associated with the village volunteers' group in Churachandpur district, were arrested from Imphal on June 6, the statement said.

Similarly, the CBI arrested Kanan Singh, a member of Meitei outfit Arambai Tenggol (AT), for his alleged involvement in various criminal activities related to the 2023 Manipur violence, officials said.

The federal agency is probing cases related to the Manipur ethnic violence in accordance with a direction of the Supreme Court.

"The trials of the Manipur violence cases have been shifted from Manipur to Guwahati in view of the law-and-order," a spokesperson said.

Following the arrests and unrests in the state, Manipur Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla held a security review meeting with senior officials.

Ibomcha, the Lamlai constituency legislator, said, "We were informed that five people were arrested, and of them, one Kanan Singh, was arrested by the CBI in connection with a case. We appreciate the roles the Arambai Tenggol have taken during the recent flood."

He was immediately taken to Guwahati, where he will be produced before a court for his police remand.

The arrests came as protests continued on Sunday, even as the administration imposed prohibitory orders and suspended internet services in five Imphal valley districts for five days, officials said. *—PTI*

>>>>More on Page 4

Protests erupted over the arrest of a leader of Meitei outfit Arambai Tenggol, in Manipur on Sunday

PHOTO: PTI

Israel vows to block Greta Thunberg from Gaza

Greta Thunberg and Rima Hassan

PHOTO: X

TEL AVIV, 8 JUNE

Israel's defence minister has vowed to prevent an aid boat carrying Greta Thunberg and other activists from reaching the Gaza Strip.

Defence Minister Israel Katz said that Israel wouldn't allow anyone to break its naval blockade of the Palestinian territory, aimed at preventing Hamas from importing arms.

Thunberg, a climate campaigner is among 12 activists aboard the Madleen, which is operated by the Freedom Flotilla Coalition. The vessel departed Sicily on 1 June on a mission aimed at breaking the sea blockade of Gaza and deliver humanitarian aid, while raising awareness on the humanitarian crisis.

Rima Hassan, a French national of Palestinian descent and member of the European Parliament, is among those onboard. She has been barred from entering Israel because of her opposition to Israeli policies toward the Palestinians.

After a three-month total blockade, Israel allowed basic aid into Gaza. Yet, famine may occur unless the blockade and war end. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 6

PHOTO: X

IAF TO GET RS 10,000 CRORE INDIGENOUS I-STAR SPY PLANES

NEW DELHI, 8 JUNE

The Defence Ministry is set to take up Rs 10,000 crore proposal to buy three sophisticated spy planes to help Indian Air Force get a clear air-to-ground picture to carry out precision strikes against enemy ground targets like radar stations, air defence units and other mobile objects.

The Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance (I-STAR) is expected to be taken up for clearance at a high-level defence ministry meeting scheduled to be held in the fourth week of June, defence officials said.

The spy aircraft project includes the acquisition of three aircraft through an open tender from foreign manufacturers, including Boeing and Bombardier. *—ANI*

CONQUERING SPACE

Indian astronaut Shukla set for the 'amazing journey'

PHOTO: X

NEW DELHI, 8 JUNE

Ahead of his historic journey to the International Space Station (ISS), Indian astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla has termed the preparations for the Axiom-4 mission as an "amazing journey" and that he was extremely fortunate to be part of something that is "much larger than yourself".

The 39-year-old Indian Air Force pilot is all set to travel with three other crew members to ISS onboard SpaceX's Dragon spacecraft, mounted on a Falcon 9 rocket, that will lift off from the Kennedy Space Centre in Florida on Tuesday at 5.52pm IST.

Shukla, who goes by the nickname "Shux", will be the second Indian to travel to space, 41 years after his idol Rakesh Sharma undertook a spaceflight in 1984 onboard erstwhile Soviet Union's Soyuz spacecraft for an eight-day stay in orbit.

Shukla said that, like Sharma, he would like to inspire the next generation to take up space science. *—PTI*

NIA takes over Suhas Shetty's murder case

NEW DELHI, 8 JUNE

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has handed over the investigation into the murder of former Bajrang Dal activist, Suhas Shetty to the National Investigation Agency (NIA), marking a significant move amid rising concerns over possible larger conspiracies behind the incident.

Shetty, a prominent right-wing youth leader associated with the Bajrang Dal in Karnataka's coastal belt, was brutally murdered on 1 May in Sullia of Dakshina Kannada district. The activist, in his early 30s, was attacked by unidentified assailants while returning home late at night. He succumbed to his injuries on the spot.

The incident triggered widespread protests in the region, with local Bajrang Dal and Vishwa Hindu Parishad units alleging a targeted killing.

On 1 May, a group of people came in two vehicles and blocked the way of Shetty, who was moving in a car with his friends.

They then hacked Shetty to death.

A total of 11 people have been held so far in the case. *—ANI*

BJP protests in City; want CM, DyCM to step down

Ashoka says, the Cong has no moral right to rule atop 11 bodies, notes disregard for police warning

BENGALURU, 8 JUNE

Karnataka BJP legislators and Parliamentarians protested in front in front of the Mahatma Gandhi statue at Vidhana Soudha on Sunday, demanding the resignation of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar over the Bengaluru stampede that claimed 11 lives.

The BJP leaders called for legal action against the two senior Congress leaders, holding them directly responsible for the tragedy.

The protest was led by the Leader of Opposition in Legislative Assembly R Ashoka and Chalavadi Narayanaseamy.

Carrying placards and shouting slogans, the protesters accused the government of negligence that led to the deaths.

Slogans termed the CM and Deputy CM as "murderers".

The BJP leaders are also planning to meet Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot soon, seeking his intervention and calling for the dismissal of the government.

Speaking during the protest, Ashoka demanded justice, calling Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar "Real Culprits of Bengaluru (RCB)".

Ashoka added that they cannot rule the State atop the bodies of 11 people. "You have no moral right, you have lost it. You are accused in the eyes of law".

Speaking at a press conference later, he said that if Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar were not engaged in a power struggle, students would not have lost their lives. The police had informed them of the first death by noon. Eight had already died when the event began, yet the program continued, he accused.

Opposition leaders R Ashok, Chalavadi Narayanaswamy with MLAs and MLCs protest against the State government over the stampede, in front of Gandhi statue at Vidhana Soudha premises in Bengaluru on Sunday **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

On 4 June, Vidhana Soudha police wrote to the Chief Secretary, clearly stating that the event was organised in haste, and due to a staff shortage, security arrangements would be compromised. They had also recommended prohibiting the event, Ashoka recalled. "The government disregarded all these instructions."

"The should provide Rs 1 crore as compensation. We will all donate one month's salary to the victims' families," he declared.

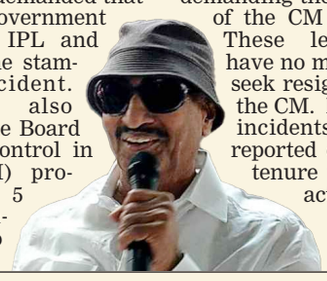
–Salar News with Agencies

Vatal Nagaraj demands a ban on IPL, RCB

MYSURU, 8 JUNE

Members of Pro Kannada Organisations led by Kannada Chaluvali Vatal Party leader Vatal Nagaraj protested at Hardinge Circle in Mysuru on Sunday and demanded that the Union Government banned the IPL and RCB after the stampede incident. Protesters also demanded the Board of Cricket Control in India (BCCI) provide a Rs 5 crore compensation to the families of the victims who died in the stampede. The BCCI should not be a silent spectator, they said. Nagraj also criticised Opposition leaders HD Kumaraswamy, BS Yediyurappa and others for demanding the resignation of the CM and DyCM. These leaders also have no moral right to seek resignation from the CM. He said such incidents were also reported during their tenure without any action.

–Salar News



"Vijay Mallya earlier promoted and launched the team RCB, Royal Challengers Bengaluru, but the CM and Deputy CM are the new RCB – Real Culprits of Bengaluru... Siddaramaiah's mind is not functioning right. (So) we demand the resignation of the CM and DyCM

-R Ashoka, Leader of Opposition

"Several were killed during stampedes in Prayagraj. Did BJP leaders demand the resignation of Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath? 21 innocent tourists were gunned by terrorists in Pahalgam. Prime Minister Narendra Modi did not resign.

-Harishgowda Congress MLA

STEADY FAITH

Muslims offered special prayers on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azah (Bakrid) at Chamrajpet idgah maidan and Khudussab eidgah maidan in Bengaluru **PHOTOS: MOHAMMED ASAD**

SC internal reservation to continue at 'citizen' centres

BENGALURU, 8 JUNE

A provision was made to continue the survey for gathering the empirical data, aimed at providing internal reservation among Scheduled Castes (SCs) in Karnataka, at the 9,400 State level 'citizen centric services' centres from 9 to 22 June, the commission overseeing the survey said.

With about 10 per cent of the survey yet to be completed and amid requests for time extension, the commission headed by retired judge of the Karnataka High Court HN Nagmohan Das made the announcement.

The commission noted that in the wake of the schools

reopening in the State, the teachers who were appointed as enumerators for the survey have been relieved from the survey work.

"Thus, in order to facilitate the continuation of the SC castes' survey, a provision has been made to carry out the same at the existing 9,400 state level 'citizen centric services' centres, such as, Karnataka One, Bengaluru One and Grama One and also at the 198 BBMP ward offices," an official release dated 7 June that was released to media on Sunday said.

Apart from this, the same facility for the survey will also be provided at the Bapuji Seva Kendras, across the state. To enter the said information at the centres, the citizen's Aadhaar card or the ration card number is required.

Additionally, the time limit for SC families to submit an online self-declaration was also extended up to 22 June.

–PTI

Somanna directs Railways to expedite railway project in Mysuru

MYSURU, 8 JUNE

Union Minister for Railways V Somanna on Sunday directed the officials to complete all ongoing railway projects within stipulated dates in the Mysuru railway division.

Reviewing development works in the region, Somanna also gave directions to railway department officers to promote Kannada as administrative language.

Meanwhile, Divisional Railway Manager Mudit Mittal spoke about extension of additional five platforms, construction of skywalk and subway, as part of modernisation of Mysuru Railway Station under the Rs 439 crore project. 8 acres and 29 gunts of land for Naganahalli Railwayyard extension project has been identified, he said.

Union Minister Somanna directed railway department officers to promote Kannada as administrative language **PHOTO: X/SOMANNA**

His department has written a letter to the State government to clear the land acquisition.

—Salar News

SOLDIER AIRLIFTED FROM KARGIL; OUT OF DANGER

CHANDIGARH, 8 JUNE

In a remarkable show of military medical skill, doctors at Command Hospital Chandimandir, under the Army's Western Command, saved the life of a soldier airlifted from Kargil in a critical condition.

The soldier was experiencing severe respiratory distress and was diagnosed with bilateral pulmonary thromboembolism, a high-altitude-related emergency, according to an official statement issued on Sunday.

A team of medical specialists, led by Lieutenant Colonel Purushotham, provided timely diagnosis and emergency treatment, including clot dissolution, which proved life-saving.

The soldier is now stable and recovering on oxygen support.

The Indian Air Force successfully carried out the high-stakes evacuation on Saturday using an AN-32 aircraft. Operating at the edge of its performance limits, the aircraft's mission highlighted the IAF's exceptional professionalism and dedication.

—PTI

NWKSRTC writes to State Govt, seeking name change

BELAGAVI, 8 JUNE

The North West Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (NWKSRTC) operating buses from 5 districts in North Karnataka passed a resolution seeking to change the corporation name to Rani Channamma Road Transport Corporation (RCRTC). They sent the resolution to the State government. A meeting chaired by Raju Kage, Corporation chairman and legislator from Kagwad constituency in Belagavi district, held on 18 Feb unanimously decided to change the name. The committee had also considered the names Kittur Rani Channamma Transport Corporation and Kittur Karnataka Road Transport Corporation, before deciding on RCRTC.

—Salar News

MORE TO COME?

Modi regime turns eleven as allies stay put

NEW DELHI, 8 JUNE

When Prime Minister Narendra Modi took oath for a third term on 9 June, 2024, Rahul Gandhi sounded rather upbeat on the back of the BJP's unexpected loss of majority in the Lok Sabha polls amid its campaign claim of crossing 400 in the 543-member House.

"We have finished Modi psychologically. His government will be removed soon," the Congress leader asserted as critics noted the BJP's crucial dependence on TDP's N Chandrababu Naidu and JD(U)'s Nitish Kumar, both with a history of switching alliances, and its weak show in big states like Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra.

Yet, as the Modi government marks its first anniversary in the third term and 11th overall on Monday, the Prime Minister appears secure and sounds as confident, while his two allies have not turned out to be unreliable crutches, as the Opposition hoped.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 2024 victory was only possible with TDP's N Chandrababu Naidu and JD(U)'s Nitish Kumar's alliance **PHOTO: PTI**

Meanwhile, the burst of fresh optimism in the Opposition INDIA bloc fizzled out. The BJP wrested Delhi after 26 years, eclipsing AAP's Arvind Kejriwal on his home turf, while West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee-led TMC have drifted away from the Congress, denting the bloc.

And while the BJP may like to posture itself as strong and unified and the Opposition as splintered, there are notable lapses.

The Centre announced a 'caste census', one of the prongs with which the Opposition was consistently prodding the ruling-coalition, and which the BJP had repeatedly denounced as partisan. While the motive for the move is open to interpretation, the Oppositionclaimed it as its own victory.

Meanwhile, the Stalin led DMK appeared to briefly lead a powerful alliance against the delimitation exercise, momentarily uniting Southern states against "northern hegemony".

Minorities too appeared to be dissatisfied, epitomised in the nationwide Waqf protests following the Waqf Amendment Bills.

Yet, the power of the Modi-led BJP is undeniable, as it overcame its political setback and projected itself as unified and in control.

–PTI with agencies

● While the Modi government continued to project itself as strong and unified, there are notable chinks in the armour, from the caste-census to nationwide Waqf protests and the southern rise against delimitation

PHOTO: ANI

Cricketer Rinku Singh engaged to MP Priya Saroj

LUCKNOW, 8 JUNE

Indian cricketer Rinku Singh has announced his engagement to Samajwadi Party MP Priya Saroj in a lavish ceremony held in Lucknow. The event was attended by numerous prominent political figures, including party president Akhilesh Yadav and his wife, Dimple Yadav, alongside other well-known politicians such as Rajeev Shukla and Jaya Bachchan. After ceremony, MP Awadhesh Prasad conveyed his best wishes to the couple, expressing hopes for their happiness. Rinku Singh, celebrated for playing with the Kolkata Knight Riders in the recent Indian Premier League, and Priya Saroj, a first-time MP representing Machhlishahr, were centre of attention during the engagement festivities, which have attracted media coverage due to the blend of sports and politics. —*PTI*

MCD organises 120 property tax camps

NEW DELHI, 8 JUNE

To encourage compliance with property tax regulations, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) has organised 120 camps across its twelve zones as part of the Property Tax Amnesty Scheme 2025-26, known as SUNIYO. The camps aimed to assist property owners in filing their taxes while taking advantage of potential waivers on dues, interest, and penalties up to financial year 2019-20. The MCD reported enthusiastic participation from residents, prompting plans for more camps to increase outreach. Taxpayers must pay the principal amount for the current financial year and the previous five years to benefit from the scheme. The MCD has set up a helpline to address queries and guide residents through the filing process. —*PTI*

Himachal govt launches border tourism initiative

SHIMLA, 8 JUNE

Himachal Pradesh government has unveiled a new border tourism initiative, enabling regulated access to sites along India-China border, including Lepcha-La and Chitkul in Kinnaur. Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu is set to inaugurate the initiative. This scheme aims to promote sustainable tourism while ensuring national security and preserving the unique tribal heritage of the region. Previously, access to these strategic locations required special permission from the Indo-Tibetan Border Police and the Indian Army. The initiative seeks to enhance local infrastructure, boost livelihoods through responsible tourism. —*PTI*

EC dares Rahul to write to it on rigging claim

Fadnavis says Rahul insulted people's mandate & democratic process

NEW DELHI/ MUMBAI, 8 JUNE

A day after Congress leader Rahul Gandhi sought the Election Commission's response on his article alleging rigging in Maharashtra polls, sources in the poll authority said Sunday the constitutional body would respond only if the Leader of the Opposition writes to it directly.

They also pointed out that as part of its outreach, the EC had invited all six national parties for separate interactions. While the other five met the EC brass, Congress cancelled the 15 May meeting.

Gandhi had on Saturday hit back at the Election Commission after sources in the poll panel rejected allegation of rigging in the 2024 Maharashtra Assembly polls, saying evasion would not protect its credibility but telling the truth would.

In an article, the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha had alleged "match-fixing" in the Maharashtra polls and claimed that it would next happen in the Bihar elections and "anywhere the BJP is losing".

Rahul Gandhi, Devendra Fadnavis PHOTO: PTI

- The Election Commission rejected the charge, saying defaming the poll panel after an unfavourable verdict is absolutely absurd.

Responding to a question on Gandhi's demand for CCTV footage of polling stations of Maharashtra of the evening hours, the sources said as per instructions of the EC, the CCTV footage of polling stations can always be scrutinised by the competent high court when an election petition is filed.

Meanwhile, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Sunday said Congress MP Rahul Gandhi, instead of introspecting on the defeat in the 2024 state assembly polls, has been repudiating the mandate given by the people because they rejected him.

In a post on X, Gandhi outlined the alleged electoral irregularities in a stepwise manner — fake voters are added, voter turnout is inflated, bogus voting is facilitated, and evidence is subsequently hidden.

The Election Commission rejected the charge, saying defaming the poll panel after an unfavourable verdict is absolutely absurd.

In response to Gandhi's claims, Fadnavis in his article said the Congress leader has been constantly "insulting" the democratic process and the people's mandate. —*PTI*

BJP leaders are replying on behalf of the Election Commission. It only confirms that match-fixing did take place. Rahul Gandhi, in his detailed article, has exposed how the Maharashtra assembly elections were marred by fraud, manipulation, and a systematic violation

-Ramesh Chennithala, Senior Congress leade

Union Home Minister and BJP leader Amit Shah chairs the meeting of the state core committee of the Tamil Nadu BJP, in Tamil Nadu PHOTO: PTI

Shah chairs TN BJP meet, says people fed up of corruption

MADURAI, 8 JUNE

Union Home Secretary Amit Shah chaired a key BJP core committee meeting in Madurai on Sunday, stating that the people of Tamil Nadu are "fed up" with the DMK government's "massive corruption".

His visit aimed to assess the party's preparedness for the 2026 Assembly elections and outline poll strategies.

Earlier, Shah prayed at the historic Meenakshi Amman Temple, where he was received with traditional honours by priests and the Madurai Aadheenam pontiff, who presented him with a saffron shawl and spiritual texts.

The pontiff also urged Shah to reclaim Katchatheevu and resolve issues affecting fishermen and Sri Lankan Tamils. Shah later said he prayed for the nation's progress and citizens' wellbeing.

Tight security was in place during his visit. —*PTI*

AAP leader Sanjay Singh visits the site of the recently demolished Madrasi Camp, a slum cluster in Jangpura, in New Delhi PHOTO: PTI

AAP leaders visit Madrasi Camp demolition site

NEW DELHI, 8 JUNE

Aam Aadmi Party's Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh and Delhi unit chief Saurabh Bharadwaj visited the site of the Madrasi Camp slum demolition on Sunday, where they met with displaced residents and criticised the BJP government over the recent eviction drive.

The Madrasi Camp, a slum cluster located alongside the Barapullah drain near Nizamuddin Railway Station, had been home to approximately 370 families for nearly six decades. Last month, authorities issued eviction notices before clearing the area. However, only 189 families were deemed eligible for relocation to government flats in Narela, leaving many without accommodation.

Singh and Bharadwaj accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of failing to fulfil his promise of 'jahan jhuggi wahan makan' — a pledge to provide houses to slum dwellers at the sites of their huts. They described the promise as "hollow like many others" made by the BJP.

Taking to social media platform X, Bharadwaj stated, "AAP will fight for the rights of slum dwellers from the streets to the Parliament." He added that the BJP had demolished homes instead of honouring its commitments, leaving hundreds homeless.

Sanjay Singh condemned the eviction, saying, "People go broke building a house. It is heartless to destroy their settlements. These families, who migrated from Tamil Nadu over 50 years ago, had built lives here."

A government notice dated 30 May informed residents that trucks would be available between 31 May and 1 June near Barapullah Bridge to assist with relocation.

The Aam Aadmi Party has vowed to continue raising the plight of the displaced both publicly and in Parliament, accusing the BJP of disregarding the interests of the poor. – *PTI*

SAYS TEJASHWI YADAV

Modi govt hijacking constitutional bodies

PATNA, 8 JUNE

RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav on Sunday accused the Narendra Modi government of "hijacking" constitutional bodies such as the Election Commission, alleging that the ruling BJP is aware of poll schedules even before they are officially announced.

The former Deputy Chief Minister also claimed that the 2020 state assembly elections were not conducted fairly, supporting concerns expressed by Rahul Gandhi of the Congress party, an ally in the Mahagathbandhan, about the Maharashtra polls.

"Since the Narendra Modi-led NDA took office in 2014, all constitutional bodies have been effectively taken over," Yadav told reporters. "It is surprising that the BJP's IT Cell appears to know the election dates before the Election Commission announces them. We are closely watching these developments."

He stressed that constitutional institutions must function independently and questioned how justice could be expected if they are influenced by political powers.

Commenting on the 2020 Bihar assembly polls, Yadav said, "We were expected to form the government. The Election Commission held three press briefings to explain why counting was halted in the evening, but why did it resume at night? Some Mahagathbandhan candidates initially declared winners were later declared losers."

Rahul Gandhi recently alleged rigging in the 2024 Maharashtra election, which was won by a BJP-led alliance. He described it as "match-fixing" and warned similar incidents might occur in Bihar and other states where the BJP faces defeat.

The Election Commission has rejected these claims. —*PTI*

'PEOPLE TO DECIDE WHERE I SHOULD CONTEST FROM'

ARA, 8 JUNE

Union Minister Chirag Paswan on Sunday asserted that it is for the people of Bihar to decide from which seat in the state he should contest the assembly elections due later this year.

Paswan, the Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) chief, made the statement at a rally in Ara in Bhojpur district where his party sounded the poll bugle.

"I will contest the assembly polls in Bihar. I will contest not just in Bihar but for Bihar and its people. I am the son of Ramvilas Paswan. I will realise the dreams of my father and work for 'Bihar first, Bihari first' to change Bihar," recalling an old slogan he had coined ahead of the previous assembly polls in 2020.

At that time, he was heading the Lok Janshakti Party founded by his father. —*PTI*

UP GOVT TO ANNOUNCE MSP FOR MAIZE, PROCUREMENT CENTRES: CM

AURAIYA, 8 JUNE

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath announced that the state will soon open procurement centres for maize and declare a Minimum Support Price (MSP) for crop. Speaking at "Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan", he highlighted maize's growing importance as a profitable third crop, now cultivated over five lakh hectares, with farmers earning up to Rs 2.5 lakh per hectare.

Adityanath credited the Narendra Modi government since 2014 for placing farmers at the centre of political focus, launching schemes such as the Soil Health Card, PM-KISAN, irrigation projects, and crop insurance. He emphasised the 'Lab to Land' initiative, which brings agricultural scientists directly to farmers' fields. —*PTI*

COUNTERING TERRORISM

India, Mongolia exchange best practices

NEW DELHI, 8 JUNE

Military contingents of India and Mongolia participating in an ongoing bilateral exercise in Ulaanbaatar are actively exchanging best practices in counter-terrorism operations and precision sniping, thereby improving interoperability, officials said on Sunday.

Through joint drills, both forces are working to strengthen their ability to respond effectively to contemporary security challenges, they said.

The 17th edition of the joint military exercise "Nomadic Elephan" is being held from 31 May to 13 June, at the Special Forces Training Centre in that country. The exercise is aimed at enhancing interoperability between the two forces.

"Focused on the conduct of non-conventional operations in semi-urban and mountainous terrain under a United Nations mandate, the exercise aims to enhance the operational capabilities of both the forces," a senior official of the Indian Army said.

- Through joint drills, both forces are working to strengthen their ability to respond effectively to contemporary security challenges, they said. The 17th edition of the joint military exercise "Nomadic Elephan" is being held from 31 May to 13 June, at the Special Forces Training Centre in that country.

The participating contingents are actively exchanging "best practices in counter-terrorism operations and precision sniping", thereby improving interoperability, he said.

The two-week exercise is an annual event conducted alternately in India and Mongolia. Its last edition was conducted at Umroi, Meghalaya, in July 2024. The exercise reflects the growing defence cooperation between India and Mongolia.

A key feature of the exercise includes simulated UN peacekeeping operations, designed to "mirror real-world scenarios" where multinational forces must collaborate efficiently in diverse and challenging conditions," he said.

As the exercise progresses, both sides are engaging in a variety of tactical drills, sharing combat experiences and exchanging valuable knowledge and expertise.

These engagements are instrumental in building interoperability and ensuring that Indian and Mongolian forces can operate seamlessly in future peacekeeping or humanitarian missions, they said. —*PTI*

The exercise is aimed at enhancing interoperability between the two forces PHOTO: PTI

DRDO transfers 9 systems tech to 10 industry partners

NEW DELHI, 8 JUNE

A DRDO laboratory has transferred technologies of nine systems, including a mounted gun system and an anti-terrorist vehicle (tracked version), to 10 industry partners, the defence ministry said on Sunday.

The licensing agreements were handed over in the presence of the Secretary, Department of Defence Research and Development, and DRDO Chairman Samir V Kamat during an event organised at the Vehicles Research and Development Establishment (VRDE) on Saturday.

In line with the government's vision to establish a robust defence industrial ecosystem with the participation of both public and private sectors, VRDE, a DRDO laboratory located in Ahilyanagar, Maharashtra, has taken a major step forward by transferring technologies of nine systems to 10 industry partners, the defence ministry said in a statement.

The technologies transferred to the industry include Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear (CBRN) Recce Vehicle Mk-II (Bharat Electronics Limited); Mounted Gun System (Bharat Forge Limited); and Anti-Terrorist Vehicle - Tracked Version (Metaltech Motor Bodies Private Limited). The technology of Full Trailer of 70t Tank Transporter for Main Battle Tank Arjun Mk-1A has been transferred to four industry partners, according to the list of technologies shared in the statement.

Besides, a Multi-Purpose Decontamination System has been transferred to two defence industry partners. Kamat complimented the DRDO and the industry for the "exceptional performance of indigenous systems during Operation Sindoor".

The DRDO chairman appreciated the efforts of VRDE in providing high-end technological solutions for land systems and weapon platforms. —*PTI*

Assets linked to Mexican drug cartel seized in UP

NEW DELHI, 8 JUNE

The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) has confiscated assets worth Rs 9.20 crore in Uttar Pradesh' Noida, connected to a key suspect in a transnational drug trafficking case linked to a Mexican cartel. The assets include a luxury flat in Jaypee Greens and a factory in Kasna Industrial Area, both allegedly funded by proceeds from international narcotics trafficking. 95kg of amphetamine and an illicit drug manufacturing lab were seized in 2024, leading to the arrest of five individuals. The cartel in question, Cartel Jalisco Nueva Generacion, reportedly financed the operations via cryptocurrency transfers to Dubai, with subsequent cash payments made in Delhi through hawala channels. *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

Bhopal woman arrested for suicide bid post rape claim

BHOPAL, 8 JUNE

A 28-year-old woman has been arrested in Madhya Pradesh's Bhopal after she allegedly threatened self-immolation at the home of a man whom she accused of rape. The incident occurred in Awadhpuri Colony when the woman reportedly broke into the house and opened a gas stove, holding matchsticks in an attempt to set herself alight. A video of this has gone viral on social media. The police took the woman to the station. She had previously filed a rape complaint against a 33-year-old man after he withdrew from their relationship and married someone else. He had been arrested three months and granted bail recently. She has been taken into judicial custody. *—PTI*

White tiger cubs born at Odhisa zoo

BHUBANESWAR, 8 JUNE

A white tigress at Nandankanan Zoo Park in Odhisa's Cuttak district has given birth to two cubs, including a rare white cub. The cubs were born within their mother 'Mousumi's' enclosure on 7 June. The gender of the cubs is yet to be determined. With these new arrivals, the total tiger population at Nandankanan now stands at 29, consisting of 17 males, 10 females, and the two newborns. Among these, 19 are standard-coloured tigers, six are white, and four are melanistic, commonly referred to as black tigers. The zoo authorities are closely monitoring Mousumi and her cubs to ensure their health and wellbeing. The cubs' father is an adult tiger, Rajesh. Both parents were also born at Nandankanan Zoo. *—PTI*

IAF airlifts organs in life-saving transplant mission

NEW DELHI, 8 JUNE

Five people were given a new lease of life after a multi-organ donation from a brain-dead patient, with organs transplanted across India in a coordinated effort. The Indian Air Force (IAF) airlifted a kidney and a cornea from Bengaluru to Delhi, facilitating transplants at the Army Hospital (Research & Referral). The donor, declared brain-dead on Friday, helped save multiple lives through the procedure. The remaining kidney and cornea, along with a skin graft, were transplanted at Command Hospital Air Force Bangalore (CHAFB), in collaboration with Victoria Hospital. The liver was successfully transplanted at Gleneagles BGS Hospital. The IAF praised the seamless operation, conducted in coordination with Jeevansarthakathe Karnataka and Armed Forces medical teams. *—PTI*

Protests erupt in Manipur over arrests of leaders

Prohibitory orders; internet, mobile-data services suspended

NEW DELHI, 8 JUNE

Security personnel keep vigil after the administration imposed prohibitory orders in five Imphal valley districts following violent protests on Sunday **PHOTO: PTI**

Protests erupted across Manipur on Sunday, amid a slew of arrests. Protesters burnt tyres on roads at Uripok and Koirengei in Imphal West district and Khurai in Imphal East, defying the prohibitory orders.

At Koirengei, demonstrators dug up the road and made heaps of soil on the thoroughfares to prevent the movement of security forces.

Similar agitations were also staged in Jiribam district, neighbouring Assam.

Prohibitory orders were clamped in Imphal West, Imphal East, Thoubal, Bishnupur and Kakching districts, while internet and mobile data services, including VSAT and VPN facilities, have been suspended in these valley areas since Saturday night after violent protests erupted over the arrests of leaders of the Meitei outfit Arambai Tenggol.

Manipur Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla on Sunday held a security review meeting with senior officials in the wake of the demonstrations across the state.

A Raj Bhavan statement said the Governor also met a delegation of MLAs who apprised Bhalla of the current law and order situation in the north-eastern state.

"Today, a group of MLAs called on Governor of Manipur, Ajay Kumar Bhalla, at Raj Bhavan during which the MLAs apprised the governor of the current law and order situation in the state and requested his intervention to help find an amicable solution," the Raj Bhavan statement said.

The Governor told the delegation that all "necessary steps are being taken to address the concerns and to restore normalcy", it said.

The delegation of at least 20 legislators comprised those of the BJP and the Congress.

On Saturday, protesters torched tyres and old furniture on roads in Kwakeithel and Uripok, demanding the release of the Meitei leaders.

They clashed with security forces at different places in the state capital on June 7 night. A mob also set a bus on fire at Khurai Lamlong in Imphal East district. *—PTI*

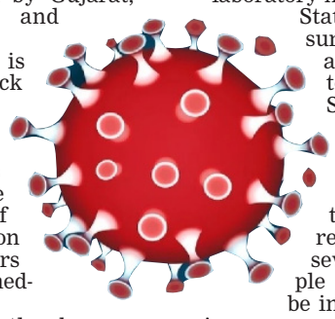
KERALA STANDS WORST-HIT

Active Covid cases in India cross 6,000-mark

NEW DELHI/ BHUBANESWAR/ KOLKATA, 8 JUNE

India's active Covid case tally crossed the 6,000 mark with 769 new infections being reported in the last 48 hours.

Kerala is the most affected state, followed by Gujarat, West Bengal and Delhi.



The Centre is conducting mock drills to check facility-level preparedness. All states are to ensure availability of oxygen, isolation beds, ventilators and essential medicines.

India currently has 6,133 active Covid-19 cases. Most cases are mild and managed under home care.

Six deaths have been reported in the last 24 hours, taking the death toll to 65 in the country since January.

Review meetings involving different agencies were held under the chairpersonship of Sunita Sharma, director general of health services to evaluate the situation.

Testing was recommended for all admitted severe acute respiratory illness cases (SARI) and 5 per cent of influenza like illness (ILI) cases. Positive SARI samples are sent for whole genome sequencing through the ICMR virus research and diagnostic laboratory network.

State and district surveillance units are closely monitoring ILI and SARI cases.

The total number of Covid-19 cases in Odisha rose to 45 in the current wave after seven more people were found to be infected with the virus.

12 people have recovered. Officials were directed to ensure Covid testing of all SARI cases coming to hospitals.

Meanwhile, West Bengal reported 71 new cases of coronavirus infection.

Altogether 53 recoveries were registered in the state, taking the number of active cases to 693. *—PTI*

Flood situation grim in Sikkim, improves in NE

GANGTOK, 8 JUNE

People LEAVE landslide-hit Chaten area in Sikkim **PHOTO: PTI**

The Sikkim government on Sunday evacuated 28 people, including three minors, stranded in Chaten in the northern part of the Himalayan state, where road connectivity has been snapped due to multiple landslides triggered by heavy rain, officials said.

"The state government arranged a helicopter and successfully evacuated 28 people, including three minors," an officials said. All evacuees have landed safely at Pakyong Greenfield Airport, he said.

This comes under the ongoing coordinated relief and evacuation efforts being undertaken in view of the recent adverse conditions that have disrupted road connectivity and access to the region, he said.

Assam

The flood situation in Assam continued to improve with the affected population and area decreasing to around 3.37 lakh in 12 districts respectively, officials said on Sunday.

An official bulletin said that the total death toll in this year's floods and landslides is at 23, including six killed in mudslides, till Saturday. Major rivers were on a receding trend.

Maharashtra

Meanwhile, the Maharashtra government as approved Rs 2.7 crore for immediate assistance to people who suffered damages due to unseasonal rains in Palghar district in the last two months, officials said on Sunday. *—PTI*

PHOTO: AI IMAGE

Dog found taking away newborn's body in MP

MHOW, 8 JUNE

A stray dog was seen clutching a dead newborn in its jaws near the toilet of a government hospital in Madhya Pradesh's Indore district, prompting police to launch a probe into the matter, officials said. The child's body had been partially eaten by dogs, as per sources.

A security guard retrieved the remains after shooing away the dog at the civil hospital in Mhow, located 25 km from the district headquarters, on Saturday.

The hospital authorities and police have begun a probe into the chain of events.

"As per the CCTV footage, the incident happened between 1.30 am and 2 am. A young girl was seen going into the toilet during this period. When we checked with staff, we found the 17-year-old girl had come here complaining of colic and had been admitted at 9 pm on Friday. We suspect the girl gave birth to a child in the toilet," Mhow civil hospital in-charge, HR Verma said.

The girl disappeared from the hospital soon after with an unidentified man, he said. *—PTI*

LITIGATION NOT EXCUSE TO GRAB PUBLIC LAND: HC

NEW DELHI, 8 JUNE

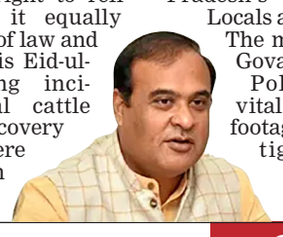
The Delhi High Court has determined that encroachers cannot claim the right to occupy public land while awaiting resolution of their rehabilitation claims, which could obstruct essential public projects. Justice Dharmesh Sharma made this declaration on 6 June while permitting the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) to continue demolition activities at the Bhoomiheen Camp in Kalkaji, South Delhi.

The court reviewed a series of petitions from approximately 1,200 residents seeking to halt demolition and maintain the status quo. However, it deemed the petitions flawed due to improper joinder of parties and a lack of valid claims under the Delhi Slum and JJ Rehabilitation and Relocation Policy.

The court said the encroachers have no legal right to remain in the area, asserting that rehabilitation claims do not guarantee a right to occupy public land. *—PTI*

16 held for cattle slaughter

GUWAHATI/NAGAON/ MATHURA, 8 JUNE



Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Sunday said 16 people were arrested for "illegally" slaughtering cattle during Eid a day ago. He said recovery of cattle parts was reported from multiple locations across Assam, and five illegal slaughter sites were found in Gumrah, Silchar and Banga districts.

"While our Constitution guarantees the right to religious freedom, it equally upholds the rule of law and public order. This Eid-ul-Zuha, disturbing incidents of illegal cattle slaughter and recovery of cattle parts were reported from multiple locations across Assam," Sarma said on X.

Altogether 16 people – nine from Cachar and seven from Sribhumi – have been arrested so far, he said.

"Five cases of cattle parts found – including near Cotton University (Kamrup M), Dhubri, Hojai, and Sribhumi (Bagargool)," Sarma added.

Pieces of meat were found strewn around among shrubs in an empty plot behind a gym on Barsana Road in Uttar Pradesh's Mathura district. Locals alleged it to be beef. The meat were found in Govardhan on 7 June. Police obtained vital clues from CCTV footage and were investigating further. *—PTI*

10 HELD AS JUDGE'S MANGALSUTRA SNATCHED IN UP

MATHURA, 8 JUNE

The police busted a gang of 10 women thieves targeting female devotees at temples in Uttar Pradesh's Mathura after a judge's mangalsutra was snatched. The thieves, hailing from Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, were arrested.

The victim is Prema Sahu, additional district and session judge in Madhya Pradesh' Ujjain, who was visiting Thakur Shri Radharaman Temple in Vrindavan.

Stolen purses containing cash, important documents and cash worth Rs 18,652 were recovered from them. *—PTI*

Delhi child's body in suitcase sparks protests, assault suspected

NEW DELHI, 8 JUNE

A nine-year-old girl was found dead, stuffed in a suitcase at a neighbour's locked house in northeast Delhi's Dayalpur area, sparking protests and outrage among residents who alleged sexual assault and murder.

The child, a resident of Nehru Vihar, had reportedly gone to deliver ice to a nearby relative on Saturday evening. When she failed to return, her family launched a frantic search. Acting on a tip-off, her father broke into a neighbour's house, where he found her body inside a bloodstained suitcase.

She was rushed to Jag Pravesh Chandra Hospital, where doctors declared her brought dead. Initial medical observations pointed to facial injuries and suspected sexual assault. Police said an autopsy report is awaited to confirm the cause of death.

A case has been registered under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and Section 6 of the POCSO Act. Multiple teams have been deployed to trace the absconding accused.

The incident triggered large-scale protests in the area, with locals blocking roads and accusing the police of negligence. Shops were shut down, and traffic in Dayalpur came to a standstill. Police and paramilitary personnel have been deployed to maintain order.

Officers assured the victim's family that a swift and thorough investigation was underway. The grieving parents have demanded immediate justice, with the father vowing not to rest until the perpetrator is caught and punished. *—PTI*

CONSUMER PANEL ASKS

Why order from a non-veg joint if it hurts you?

MUMBAI, 8 JUNE

A consumer redressal commission here has said if meat-based food hurts a "strictly vegetarian" person's religious sentiments, why should the individual opt to order from a restaurant serving both veg and non-veg items.

The commission dismissed a complaint by two persons against an eatery for allegedly wrongly serving them non-vegetarian food.

"If the complainants were strictly vegetarian and non-veg food hurts their religious sentiments, then why did they opt to order the food items from the restaurant which was delivering both non-veg and vegetarian food.....," the District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission, Mumbai Suburban (Additional) said in an order.

The complainants had ordered a steamed 'Darjeeling momo combo' with a soft drink from a Wow Momos outlet at Sion in Mumbai on December 19, 2020.

They claimed to have emphasised their vegetarian preference twice, instead receiving steamed 'chicken Darjeeling momos'.

They alleged that the outlet's display board did not clearly indicate vegetarian or non-vegetarian options for the combo, leading to their mental trauma, emotional distress and their religious feelings bring hurt.

They sought Rs 6 lakh in compensation for the distress caused.

The company contended the complainants had ordered non-vegetarian items, as indicated by the invoice. They allegedly also abused its employee and created a nuisance, leading to a refund of the order. They were provided the products free of cost.

The company also offered them a gift voucher worth Rs 1,200, but the complainants demanded Rs 3 lakh each.

The complainants could neither provide evidence regarding any religious ceremony being affected, nor establish any deficiency in the company' service, the commission said. *—PTI*

Kerala man fails to provide evidence against ED officer

- Babu alleged he was approached by private individuals seeking a bribe of Rs 2 crore to "settle" an ongoing money laundering investigation from March 2021

NEW DELHI, 8 JUNE

A Kerala businessman, Aneesh Babu, has reportedly failed to provide evidence in a bribery case against an Enforcement Directorate (ED) officer. During testimony recorded by the agency on 6 June, Babu claimed he had no proof to support his corruption allegations against the implicated investigator, Sekhar Kumar.

Babu's statement followed summons from the Kerala High Court, which mandated his appearance before the ED. He had previously missed a scheduled meeting but ultimately attended after a second notice. Babu alleged he was approached by private individuals seeking a bribe of Rs 2 crore to "settle" an ongoing money laundering investigation from March 2021. However, he could not substantiate any claims regarding numerous WhatsApp communications, nor did he produce any evidence linking Kumar to the alleged bribery.

ED sources suggested that Babu might be influenced to make these allegations, aimed at tarnishing the agency's reputation. Meanwhile, Kumar is seeking anticipatory bail, insisting he will fully cooperate with investigations. *—PTI*

HOT DAY IN DELHI

A child eats an ice cream to beat the heat during a summer afternoon in New Delhi on Sunday. ***PHOTO: PTI***

CDC leadership crisis mars new Covid vaccine entry

CDC no longer endorses the COVID-19 vaccine for healthy children or pregnant women. ***PHOTO: FREEPIK***

There was a notable absence last week when US Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. announced in a 58-second video that the government would no longer endorse the COVID-19 vaccine for healthy children or pregnant women.

The director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention — the person who typically signs off on federal vaccine recommendations — was nowhere to be seen.

The CDC, a $9.2 billion-a-year agency tasked with reviewing life-saving vaccines, monitoring diseases and watching for budding threats to Americans' health, is without a clear leader.

"I've been disappointed that we haven't had an aggressive director since — February, March, April, May — fighting for the resources that CDC needs," said Dr. Robert Redfield, who served as CDC director under the first Trump administration and supported Kennedy's nomination as the nation's health secretary.

$9.2 billion-a-year agency with no leader

The leadership vacuum at a foremost federal public health agency has existed for months, after President Donald Trump suddenly withdrew his first pick for CDC director in March. A hearing for his new nominee — the agency's former acting director Susan Monarez — has not been scheduled because she has not submitted all the paperwork necessary to proceed, according to a spokesman for Sen. Bill Cassidy, R-La., who will oversee the nomination.

HHS did not answer written questions about Monarez's nomination, her current role at the CDC or her salary. An employee directory lists Monarez, a longtime government employee, as a staffer for the NIH under the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health.

Redfield described Kennedy as "very supportive" of Monarez's nomination.

Instead, a lawyer and political appointee with no medical experience is "carrying out some of the duties" of director at the agency that for seven decades has been led by someone with a medical degree.

Matthew Buzzelli, who is also the chief of staff at the CDC, is "surrounded by highly qualified medical professionals and advisors to help fulfill these duties as appropriate," Andrew Nixon, an HHS spokesperson said in a statement.

Stalled decisions

At CDC headquarters in Atlanta, employees say Monarez was rarely heard from between late January – when she was appointed acting director – and late March, when Trump nominated her.

She also has not held any of the "all hands" meetings that were customary under previous CDC chiefs, according to several staffers.

One employee, who insisted on anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to the media and fears being fired if identified said Monarez has been almost invisible since her nomination, adding that her absence has been cited by other leaders as an excuse for delaying action.

The situation already has led to confusion.

In April, a 15-member CDC advisory panel of outside experts met to discuss vaccine policy. The panel makes recommendations to the CDC Director, who routinely signs off on them. But it was unclear during the meeting who would be reviewing the panel's recommendations, which included the expansion of RSV vaccinations for adults and a new combination shot as another option to protect teens against meningitis.

Recommendations bypassed

The problem was accentuated again last week, when Kennedy rolled out recommendations for the COVID-19 vaccine saying they were no longer recommended for healthy children or pregnant women, even though expectant mothers are considered a high-risk group if they contract the virus. Kennedy made the surprise announcement without input from the CDC advisory panel that has historically made recommendations on the nation's vaccine schedule. The CDC days later posted revised guidance that said healthy kids and pregnant women may get the shots.

Nixon, the HHS spokesman, said CDC staff were consulted on the recommendations, but would not provide staffer's names or titles. He also did not provide the specific data or research that Kennedy reviewed to reach his conclusion on the new COVID-19 recommendations, just weeks after he said that he did not think "people should be taking medical advice" from him.

"As Secretary Kennedy said, there is a clear lack of data to support the repeat booster strategy in children," Nixon said in a statement.

Research shows that pregnant women are at higher risk of severe illness, mechanical ventilation and death, when they contract COVID-19 infections. During the height of the pandemic, deaths of women during pregnancy or shortly after childbirth soared to their highest level in 50 years. Vaccinations also have been recommended for pregnant women because it passes immunity to newborns who are too young for vaccines and also vulnerable to infections. Nixon did not address a written question about recommendations for pregnant women.

Kennedy's decision to bypass the the advisory panel and announce new COVID-19 recommendations on his own prompted a key CDC official who works with the committee – Dr. Lakshmi Panagiotakopoulos – to announce her resignation last Friday.

"My career in public health and vaccinology started with a deep-seated desire to help the most vulnerable members of our population, and that is not something I am able to continue doing in this role," she wrote in an email seen by an Associated Press reporter.

—PTI

SALAR سالار

Dead Sea Scrolls older than previously thought, says AI

An AI program trained to study the handwriting styles of ancient manuscripts suggests many of the Dead Sea Scrolls might be older than previously thought, as reported in a study published in the journal Plos One on Wednesday.

The study is the latest entry in a new era of antiquity studies that has researchers use AI to reveal the secrets written on frayed and crumbling scrolls.

The new method combines AI, radiocarbon dating, and handwriting analysis to more accurately estimate an ancient text's age.

The now proposed redating could reshape our understanding of the Dead Sea Scrolls, and of Judaism and early Christianity, the authors of the study say.

"It is very exciting to set a significant step into solving the dating problem of the Dead Sea Scrolls and also creating a new tool that could be used to study other partially dated manuscript collections from history," said study author Mladen Popovic from the University of Groningen, The Netherlands.

Radiocarbon dating and AI analysis of handwriting

The Dead Sea Scrolls, the first of which were discovered in a cave in Israel in 1947, are the most momentous manuscript discovery of the past hundred years.

There are around 1,000 manuscripts in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Among them are some of the oldest known copies of texts from the Hebrew Bible. Studies of these manuscripts have profoundly changed understanding of the origins of Christianity and the formation of post-biblical Judaism

Dating these manuscripts with paleography — the study of ancient handwriting — reveals them to have been written over several hundred years between 250 B.C.E. and 100 C.E.

However, scholars have struggled to analyze ancient texts, particularly with distinguishing one writer's style from another, meaning dating isn't very reliable.

The researchers aimed to improve analytical methods by using AI to study handwriting and cross-reference this data with radiocarbon dating. Radiocarbon dating estimates the age of materials by measuring carbon-14 isotopes that slowly disappear over time.

"The advantage of the [AI] model is that it provides quantified objectivity to palaeography, reducing the method's subjectivity," the authors write.

An AI model was first trained on 24 manuscripts with reliable radiocarbon dating. The authors then used this AI model to analyze the handwriting style of 135 scrolls with unknown dates spanning three centuries from around 200 B.C.E. to 100 C.E. This created a better way of dating written manuscripts with 79% accuracy, according to the analysis. "This novel approach allowed [the researchers] to combine historical expertise with technical precision," said Thea Sommerschield and Yannis Assael, who previously developed AI tools for the study of ancient texts at the University of Oxford, UK, in a joint email to DW. Sommerschield and Assael were not involved in the study.

New Dead Sea Scroll chronology

The authors of the study believe their analysis could lead to a new chronology of the scrolls. If verified, it would change understanding of the history of ancient Judea and the people who wrote the texts.

The AI analysis found the manuscripts are older than previous estimates overall, suggesting dates in the early second century B.C.E., and sometimes slightly earlier.

Scholars often assume that the rise and expansion of the Hasmonaean kingdom from the mid-second century B.C.E. onward caused a rise in "literacy scribal intellectual culture." The authors say their findings suggest that scribes were copying multiple literary manuscripts before this period.

Sommerschield and Assael say the new study shows AI could be used to provide more accurate dating of other ancient texts.

"This new study shows that computational tools don't diminish the role of human expertise, they enhance it, opening new paths for discovery in even the most well-studied texts," they said in their email.

Antiquity scholars believe they are on the brink of a new era of because of AI. Researchers have also, for example, been using AI to translate ancient texts that have been vexing ancient scholars for decades

—DW news

Dead Sea Scrolls might be older than previously thought ***PHOTO: FREEPIK***

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

International Space Station to retire raising questions on space partnership

Space station has hosted thousands of scientific experiments ***PHOTO: FREEPIK***

In five years' time, the International Space Station will be retired. This symbol of peaceful collaboration is set to exit space at a time of increased and convergent geopolitical and technological competition on Earth. In uninterrupted operation for more than two decades, the space station has hosted thousands of scientific experiments in microgravity and welcomed 250 astronauts from 20 nations. A joint project between the US' NASA, Russia's Roscosmos, the European Space Agency, the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency and the Canadian Space Agency, it included participation from 15 countries.

Needless to say, the world and space are today heading in a different direction. What will space look like in five years? What will Earth's geopolitics look like in five years? Will there be the same opportunities for collaboration in research and science in space? The answers are starting to unfold and, noting the importance of space in terms of global communications and intelligence, we are noticing the erasure of commercialization within the space sector. In short, it is back to single-use and not even dual-use.

Today, the only country ready for the post-International Space Station era is China. The Tiangong space station, which has been fully functioning since late 2022, is a significant step in China's ascent to prominence as a global space power. Tiangong is, for now, composed of three modules: the Tianhe core module and two laboratories, Wentian and Mengtian. Just like the International Space Station, it orbits Earth at a distance of about 400 km.

It can support more than 100 scientific studies, ranging from biology to materials science, while three astronauts are hosted at a time on six-month rotations. The plan is to expand the station to six modules. This would mean doubling its current size. Despite repeated delays, China also plans to launch the Xuntian space telescope, which will orbit alongside Tiangong and periodically dock for maintenance. This means China is establishing a self-sufficient infrastructure.

Sun Zhibin, of the National Space Science Centre in Beijing, last week said China is creating a rapid-response space defense system to detect and drive away suspect spacecraft. It aims to use a tiny robotic thruster to grab hold of unknown objects and propel them away from the Tiangong space station or other vital space equipment. There is no doubt this could also play an offensive role.

So, where does that leave the rest of the world? What is the US' post-space station plan? What is Europe's?

There are several private American companies working on what are defined as commercial space stations. Axiom Space is creating a modular station that will initially be attached to the International Space Station, before aiming for independent operation by 2031 with a focus on research, manufacturing and tourism.

NanoRacks, under the Starlab project alongside Voyager Space and Lockheed Martin, plans a free-flying station dedicated to science and industrial applications, targeted for launch in 2028. And Blue Origin, alongside Sierra Space and Boeing, is developing the Orbital Reef station, envisioned as a mixed-use space "business park" supporting research, manufacturing and tourism. With a modular design, it is expected to be operational by 2030. More recently, Vast has announced its plans for Haven-1, the first commercial space station, which is set for launch in 2026. It will support short missions with high-speed internet connectivity via Starlink.

The big issues are whether these companies will be able to deliver on time and whether the projects will be financially successful. Some have already faced issues.

These space station projects are supported by NASA's goal of transitioning low Earth orbit activities to the private sector. Yet, we need to be realistic. While it is clear that China's approach is more state-led and centralized, all these private companies are dependent on government contracts. More than 75 percent of the revenues for space hardware, or what are known as upstream companies, are generated by space agencies, ministries of defense and intelligence services. The competition certainly allows for better pressure on deliverables and prices, but the source is ultimately the same: government.

Axiom Space has raised more than $505 million in private funding, including a $350 million Series-C round in 2023. Additionally, the company has secured more than $2.2 billion in customer contracts, mainly from government entities. In 2021, NanoRacks was awarded a NASA contract worth $160 million through the Commercial Low-Earth Orbit Destinations program to support the development of Starlab. Blue Origin was also awarded $130 million by NASA. China, meanwhile, benefits from its purchasing power parity, which multiplies its achievements as companies burn cash.

With the way geopolitics is evolving on Earth, one can expect that these space stations will serve more than just science. Satellites have a critical role in modern defense for secure communications, surveillance and navigation, as well as acting as early warning systems. Space-based assets are also vital in conflict scenarios. Their importance has been clear in the war in Ukraine, where satellite imagery and communications have proved decisive on the battlefield, especially with drones.

This confirms that space has become a battle domain as crucial as land, sea, air and cyber. Hence, there is a need for both defending against and developing capabilities to disrupt or disable adversaries' satellites through cyberattacks, jamming or even antisatellite weapons. This is essential for deterrence.

Recently analyzed swabs taken in May 2023 found an unknown bacterium, Niallia tiangongensis, aboard China's Tiangong station. Similar microbial challenges have been faced on the International Space Station, where strains like Acinetobacter pittii have shown signs of antibiotic resistance. This highlights the shared responsibility to manage risks as both national and commercial space habitats expand. Rather than competing in isolation, nations and private companies may find that collaboration on biosecurity and research offers some common ground.

Courtesy Arab News

PHOTO: X

Tataloo faces death for 'insulting Islamic sanctities'

DUBAI, 8 JUNE

Iranian rapper Tataloo, born Amir Hossein Maghsoudloo, faces execution in Iran after being convicted of "insulting Islamic sanctities." Known for his bold lyrics and face tattoos, the 37-year-old once backed hard-line politicians but later turned critical of the regime, especially after Mahsa Amini's death in 2022. His politically charged music resonated with disillusioned Iranian youth. Deported from Turkey in 2023, Tataloo was arrested upon return. Initially given a five-year sentence, he was later sentenced to death, a ruling recently upheld by Iran's Supreme Court. Activists and fans, known as "Tatalities," have condemned the sentence and raised concerns for his well-being after a reported suicide attempt in prison. *—PTI*

Prisoners released under false pardons in Lanka

COLOMBO, 8 JUNE

Sri Lankan police have launched an investigation into the illegal release of prisoners who were not eligible for presidential pardons. Under Article 34(1) of the Constitution, the president may pardon inmates only after review by the Ministry of Justice. However, the Criminal Investigation Department has found that several convicts were released unlawfully in the past. The probe was ordered by President Anura Kumara Dissanayake after WH Athula Tilakaratne was released under a Vesak 2025 pardon, despite not being on the approved list. The Commissioner General of Prisons was questioned for over five hours. *—PTI*

4 Baloch fighters killed in clash with militants

BARKHAN, 8 JUNE

Four Baloch fighters lost their lives following a fierce confrontation with a "state-backed" armed group in Barkhan district on Friday, as reported by The Balochistan Post. The clash took place in the Koh-e-Jandar area of Rakni tehsil and lasted for several hours, with both sides reportedly employing heavy weaponry. The deceased have been identified as Mustafa Noor from Tasp, Panjgur; Samiullah from Malai Bazaar, Turbat; Rasaan Qadir of Dansar, Awaran; and Shahzaib from Guni, Greshag. Their bodies were subsequently taken to a hospital in Rakni. Residents describe the opposing group as a "state-backed death squad," believed to operate under the patronage of Pakistan's military and intelligence agencies. *—ANI*

Rwanda to quit African bloc over dispute with Congo

KIGALI, 8 JUNE

Rwanda on Sunday announced it was going to withdraw from the Economic Community of Central African States over tensions with the Democratic Republic of Congo. The Rwanda-backed M23 armed group seized large swaths of eastern Congo earlier this year, including its two biggest cities, with the offensive having led to a broader war between the two neighbours. The office of Congolese President Felix Tshisekedi said ECCAS members had "acknowledged the aggression against the Democratic Republic of Congo by Rwanda and ordered the aggressor country to withdraw its troops from Congolese soil." Kigali was expecting to take over the leadership of the 11-member bloc at a meeting on Saturday in Equatorial Guinea. *—Agencies*

Trump deploys National Guard to LA

As deportation drive turns to riots, California governor says it will worsen the situation

PARAMOUNT, 8 JUNE

US President Donald Trump is deploying 2,000 California National Guard troops despite the Governor's objections to Los Angeles. Protests in Los Angles led to clashes between immigration authorities and demonstrators, extending into a second day where tear gas and smoke filled the air as civilians faced off with Border Patrol personnel in riot gear.

The White House said that Trump was deploying the Guardsmen to "address the lawlessness that has been allowed to fester" in California.

California Governor Gavin Newsom, a Democrat, objected to the move and said on X it was "purposefully inflammatory and will only escalate tensions".

1,000 rioters surrounded a federal law enforcement building and assaulted Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents, slashed tyres, and defaced buildings, the Department of Homeland Security claimed.

Trump had federalised part of the California's National Guard under what is known as Title 10 authority, which places him, not the Governor, atop the chain of command, according to Newsom's office.

White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said that the work the immigration authorities were doing is "essential to halting and reversing the invasion of illegal criminals into the United States. In the wake of this violence, California's feckless Democrat leaders have completely abdicated their responsibility to protect their citizens."

Border Patrol personnel fire tear gas shells during a protest in Paramount section of Los Angeles *PHOTO: PTI*

> **Hit a cop, you're going to jail... doesn't matter where you came from, how you got here, or what movement speaks to you. If the local police force won't back our men and women on the thin blue line, we (the) FBI will.**
>
>
>
> -Kash Patel, FBI Director

> **Under President Trump, violence & destruction against federal agents & federal facilities will not be tolerated.... If violence continues, active duty Marines at Camp Pendleton will also be mobilised — they are on high alert.**
>
>
>
> -Pete Hegseth, Défense Secretary

Trump's move came shortly after he issued a threat on his social media network that said that if Newsom and Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass didn't "do their jobs," then "the Federal Government will step in and solve the problem".

Border Patrol personnel in riot gear and gas masks stood guard outside an industrial park in the city of Paramount, deploying tear gas as bystanders and protesters gathered on medians and across the street. Some jeered at officers while recording the events on smartphones.

"ICE out of Paramount. We see you for what you are," a woman said through a megaphone. "You are not welcome here."

One handheld sign read, "No Human Being is Illegal."

—Agencies

Indian-American candidates win runoff races in Texas' city councils

Two Indian-American candidates have won their respective city council runoff elections in Texas. Sanjay Singhal, a retired energy executive and IIT Delhi graduate, secured a decisive victory over fellow Indian-American Nasir Hussain in Sugar Land's District 2. According to unofficial results from Fort Bend County, Singhal received 2,346 votes against Hussain's 777. Similarly, Sukh Kaur, a Sikh-American and education reformer, scored a landslide victory in San Antonio to retain her District 1 council seat. Kaur, a non-profit leader who lives in San Antonio with her husband and two children, defeated challenger Patty Gibbons with 65 per cent of the votes. *—PTI*

US terminates Temporary Protected Status for Nepal

The US has terminated the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) provided to Nepal in the wake of the 2015 earthquake, a media report said. A US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) notice on Saturday said TPS would not be extended for Nepal after its expiration on 24 June this year. TPS allows immigrants from designated countries without another legal status to stay in the US for up to 18 months and get legal work authorisation when social circumstances prevent a safe return. According to the DHS, about 12,700 Nepalese nationals have TPS, with over 5,500 having become legal permanent residents of the US. Over 7,000 Nepalis will have to return to the country once the TPS is terminated. *—PTI*

IN CRITICAL STATE

Colombian Prez poll hopeful shot at during rally; survives

BOGOTA, 8 JUNE

Miguel Uribe Turbay *PHOTO: X*

Colombian Senator Miguel Uribe Turbay, a possible candidate in the country's Presidential election next year, was shot and wounded at a campaign rally in Bogota on Saturday, authorities said.

The attack took place in a park in the Fontibon neighbourhood when armed assailants shot him from behind, said his party, the Right-wing Democratic Centre.

Images circulating on social media showed Uribe Turbay, 39, covered in blood being held by several people. A medical report from the Santa Fe Foundation hospital said the Senator was admitted in a critical condition and is undergoing a "neurosurgical and peripheral vascular procedure."

The Attorney General's Office, which is investigating the shooting, said the Senator received two gunshot wounds in the attack, which wounded two others. A 15-year-old boy was arrested at the scene with a firearm, the office said.

Columbia said it was offering a reward for the capture of all those responsible.

"Respect life, that's the red line," President Gustavo Petro said on X. He cancelled a planned trip to France "due to the seriousness of the events".

Uribe Turbay is the son of a journalist who was kidnapped and killed in 1991 during one of the country's most violent periods.

- A medical report said the Senator was admitted in a critical condition and is undergoing a "neurosurgical and peripheral vascular procedure"

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio urged Petro "to dial back the inflammatory rhetoric and protect Colombian officials".

"This is a direct threat to democracy and the result of the violent leftist rhetoric coming from the highest levels of the Colombian government," Rubio said.

Colombia will hold a Presidential election on 31 May, 2026, marking the end of the Petro's term, Colombia's first Leftist President. *—PTI*

Russia uncertain about PoW exchange

MOSCOW, 8 JUNE

Russian officials said Sunday that Moscow is still awaiting official confirmation from Kyiv that a planned exchange of 6,000 bodies of soldiers killed in action will take place, reiterating allegations that Ukraine had postponed the swap.

Russian state media quoted Lt Gen Alexander Zorin, a representative of the Russian negotiating group, as saying that Russia delivered the first batch of 1,212 bodies of Ukrainian soldiers to the exchange site.

Russia and Ukraine each accused the other on Saturday of endangering plans to swap 6,000 bodies of soldiers killed in action, which was agreed upon during direct talks in Istanbul on Monday that otherwise made no progress toward ending the war.

Russia and Ukraine accused each other on Saturday of endangering plans to swap 6,000 bodies of soldiers killed in action *PHOTO: X/Tim White*

Vladimir Medinsky, a Putin aide who led the Russian delegation, said that Kyiv called a last-minute halt to an imminent swap.

In a Telegram post Saturday, Medinsky said that refrigerated trucks carrying more than 1,200 bodies of Ukrainian troops from Russia had already reached the agreed exchange site at the border when the news came.

Ukraine said Russia was playing "dirty games" and manipulating facts. The main Ukrainian authority dealing with such swaps said no date had been set for repatriating the bodies. It wasn't immediately possible to corroborate the claims. *—PTI*

Five people killed in Israeli strikes in Gaza near aid site

DEIR AL-BALAH/TEL AVIV, 8 JUNE

- The bodies were brought to Nasser Hospital in Gaza's southern city of Khan Younis

Palestinian health officials and witnesses say five people were killed and others were wounded by Israeli fire around a kilometre from an aid distribution point in the Gaza Strip run by an Israeli and US-backed group.

Israel's military, however, claimed it fired warning shots at people who approached its forces.

The bodies were brought to Nasser Hospital in Gaza's southern city of Khan Younis, which confirmed the toll.

Palestinian witnesses said Israeli forces had fired on them at a roundabout in the nearby city of Rafah as they went to get food from a site run by the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation.

The Israeli military said it fired warning shots at people it said were suspects who had advanced toward its forces and ignored warnings to turn away. It said the shooting occurred in an area in southern Gaza that is considered an active combat zone at night.

The past two weeks have seen frequent shootings near the new hubs where thousands of desperate Palestinians are being directed to collect food.

Meanwhile, Israel said on Saturday it retrieved the body of a Thai hostage abducted into the Gaza Strip during the Hamas-led attack that sparked the war, as Israel's military continued its offensive, killing at least 95 people over Friday and Saturday, according to Gaza's health ministry. *—PTI*

Chinese ship runs aground near Philippine Island

PUERTO PRINCESA, 8 JUNE

A Chinese fishing ship ran aground in stormy weather off a Philippines-occupied island in the disputed South China Sea, prompting Filipino military forces to heighten their alert levels, officials reported on Sunday.

The incident occurred on Saturday when, due to adverse weather conditions, the vessel found itself stranded in shallow waters east of Thitu Island.

Philippine military and coast guard personnel initially deployed to assist but later discovered the ship had been successfully refloated, said regional navy spokesperson Ellaine Rose Collado. Details regarding the condition of the crewmembers or any potential damage to the vessel remain unclear *—PTI*

2.5M CITIZENSHIPS AT STAKE

Italy votes on residency, job prospects

ROME, 8 JUNE

Italians began voting over two days starting Sunday on referendums that would make it easier for children born in Italy to foreigners to obtain citizenship and on providing more job protections. But apparent low public awareness risks rendering the vote invalid if turnout is not high enough.

Campaigners for the change in the citizenship law say it will help second-generation Italians born in the country to non-European Union parents better integrate into a culture they already see as theirs.

The new rules, if passed, could affect about 2.5 million foreign nationals who still struggle to be recognised as citizens.

The measures were proposed by Italy's main union and Left-wing Opposition parties.

Protesters gather for a pro-Palestinian demonstration in Rome *PHOTO: PTI*

Premier Giorgia Meloni said she would show up at the polls but not cast a ballot — an action widely criticised by the Left as antidemocratic, since it will not help reach the necessary threshold to make the vote valid.

Supporters say this reform would bring Italy's citizenship law in line with many other European countries, promoting greater social integration for long-term residents. It would also allow faster access to civil and political rights, such as the right to vote, eligibility for public employment and freedom of movement within the EU.

Activists and Opposition parties also denounced the lack of public debate on the measures, accusing the governing center-right coalition of trying to dampen interest in sensitive issues that directly impact immigrants and workers.

In May, Italy's AGCOM communications authority lodged a complaint against RAI state television and other broadcasters for a lack of adequate and balanced coverage. The four other referendums aim to roll back labour reforms, making it harder to fire some workers and increase compensation for those laid off by small businesses, reversing a previous law passed by a Center-Left government a decade ago. *—PTI*

Yunus sought polls on his own: Ex-envoy

NEW DELHI, 8 JUNE

Veena Sikri, former high commissioner of India to Bangladesh, has deemed the announcement of national elections in Bangladesh for the first half of April 2026 as "controversial." Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus of the interim government made this declaration, which Sikri believes was executed without adequate consultation with political parties, including the Bangladesh National Party (BNP), which had expressed a preference for elections by December.

In her remarks to ANI, Sikri stated, "This announcement is controversial due to several reasons—some political parties have opposed it. He (Yunus) has made this decision without consulting the parties involved. Although he speaks of reforms, he is not a constitutional government, so there is no justification for him to initiate reforms."

Sikri also emphasised that the necessity for early elections, pointing out that the new elected government would be better positioned to address reforms. Notably, the Bangladesh Army has yet to respond to the election announcement. *—PTI*

M'rashtra, K'taka dominate India's FDI inflows in FY24

NEW DELHI, 8 JUNE

According to recent data from the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Maharashtra and Karnataka collectively accounted for 51 per cent of foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows into India during the financial year 2024-25. Maharashtra led the charge, attracting USD 19.6 billion and representing 31 per cent of the country's overall FDI for the period of April to March 2024-25. Karnataka followed, drawing in USD 6.62 billion in foreign investments. Other notable states in FDI inflows included Delhi (USD 6 billion), Gujarat (USD 5.71 billion), Tamil Nadu (USD 3.68 billion), Haryana (USD 3.14 billion), and Telangana (USD 3 billion). Experts attribute the substantial FDI in Maharashtra and Karnataka to their significant advancements in infrastructure. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

G Square Group acquires 714-acres in Coimbatore

NEW DELHI, 8 JUNE

Real estate firm G Square Group has purchased a 714-acre project from Rakindo for Rs 707 crore, with plans to develop it as an integrated township in Coimbatore. The project, now rebranded as 'G Square Seven Hill', will feature a combination of plots and mixed-use development. In a statement released on Saturday, the company highlighted that this acquisition is part of a broader series of significant investments aimed at transforming Coimbatore into a premier real estate destination. The Kovai Hills project encompasses 714 acres in total, with Phase 1 covering 406 acres set to include 3,127 premium plots. The remaining 308 acres will be reserved for joint ventures with renowned villa and apartment developers. *—PTI*

Godrej leads Indian real estate market with record sales

NEW DELHI, 8 JUNE

India's 26 major publicly listed real estate firms have reported property sales valued at Rs 1.62 lakh crore in the last fiscal year, with Godrej Properties emerging as the frontrunner, achieving close to Rs 30,000 crore in pre-sales. DLF Ltd, the largest real estate player by market capitalisation, secured second place with record sales bookings exceeding ₹21,000 crore for 2024-25, reflecting a notable increase from the previous year. Following DLF are Macrotech Developers (Lodha Group), Prestige Estates Projects, and Signature Global. According to data compiled from investor presentations and regulatory filings, these 26 firms collectively reported pre-sales of Rs 1,61,722 crore, marking a more than 20 per cent rise from 2023-24. *—PTI*

Delhi announces redevelopment of Bhorgarh area

NEW DELHI, 8 JUNE

The Delhi government is set to engage a concessionaire for the redevelopment and management of the Bhorgarh Industrial Area (Bawana Phase II). This initiative also includes the establishment of project management units (PMUs) across nine additional industrial zones, as stated by state Industries Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa. Sirsa affirmed that the ongoing demands from industrialists would soon be addressed by the current government. "This initiative will transform Bhorgarh into a model industrial zone that is clean, safe, efficient, and pollution-free," he declared. The minister added that the request for proposal (RFP) has already been issued for the PMUs, following a pre-bid meeting. *—PTI*

Five telcoms in race for DRCA status, says TRAI

Agency's first round of listing likely later this month-end

NEW DELHI, 8 JUNE

PHOTO: ANI

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has announced that applications have been received from five entities aiming to be recognised as Digital Connectivity Rating Agencies (DCRAs). These agencies will evaluate properties based on TRAI's established guidelines, as per Chairman Anil Kumar Lahoti.

The TRAI is keen on launching the new rating system swiftly, with the first round of empanelment potentially taking place later this month. Interest has already been shown by several property developers regarding this innovative rating framework, similar in concept to green building or energy efficiency ratings.

The proposed star rating system will assess both new and existing buildings on their digital connectivity. TRAI encourages property developers to enhance connectivity infrastructure in older buildings to achieve better ratings. To facilitate this, a digital platform is in development, with finalised property evaluations to be published on TRAI's website.

Lahoti indicated that the DCRA system could soon become a standard selling point for both developers and prospective buyers or tenants, especially given the increasing demand for reliable connectivity in homes and workplaces. He noted that dense urban development often complicates connectivity in many locations.

Currently, TRAI has issued regulations for the rating framework and initiated the empanelment process for rating agencies. A draft manual outlining the rating process has also been released, ensuring a consistent and transparent methodology for all agencies seeking to provide ratings.

The forthcoming assessment manual will standardise the evaluation methods employed by DCRAs, offering a reference point for property managers aiming to enhance their digital connectivity infrastructure. Properties will be assessed on defined parameters, including fibre readiness, mobile network coverage, in-building solutions, and Wi-Fi infrastructure.

With over 80 per cent of data consumption occurring within buildings, ensuring robust digital connectivity has become a pressing issue.

Lahoti emphasised that the importance of in-building solutions that complement outdoor telecommunications networks, particularly as high-frequency 5G and future 6G technologies become widespread.

TRAI remains committed to rolling out the rating system promptly, anticipating that increased awareness among developers will lead to a higher number of properties seeking this valuable rating in the coming years. *—PTI*

Major relief for Infosys as GST proceedings close

NEW DELHI, 8 JUNE

PHOTO: FREEPIK

In a significant development for Infosys, the Director General of GST Intelligence (DGGI) has officially closed pre-show cause notice proceedings concerning the company's GST dues, which had amassed to an alarming Rs 32,403 crore for the financial years 2018-19 to 2021-22. This resolution marks the end of a nearly year-long saga for India's second-largest IT services firm.

Last year, the GST authorities had issued a formidable notice against Infosys regarding services availed from its overseas branches, retroactively spanning five years beginning in 2017. The amount demanded was particularly striking, surpassing the company's annual profits; for the fiscal year 2025, Infosys reported a net profit of Rs 26,713 crore.

In a filing to the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE), Infosys confirmed that it had received communication from the DGGI closing the pre-show cause notice proceedings. "This matter stands closed," the firm stated, noting that it had responded to a pre-show cause notice for the period from July 2017 to March 2022 related to the non-payment of Integrated Goods and Services Tax (IGST) under the Reverse Charge Mechanism.

The company also mentioned that it had previously received a similar notice regarding the financial year 2017-18, which was also closed by the DGGI. Infosys contended that GST should not be applicable to these expenses. In light of a recent circular from the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs, the company argued that services rendered by overseas branches to Indian entities are exempt from GST.

Furthermore, Infosys maintained that it has fulfilled all its GST obligations and is in full compliance with applicable central and state regulations. The firm has consistently asserted that their GST payments should be regarded as eligible for credit or refund against their export of IT services.

For the March quarter, Infosys reported an 11.7 per cent decline in consolidated net profit owing to employee compensation and acquisitions, while guiding for a revenue growth of 0-3 per cent in constant currency terms in the current fiscal year amid an uncertain business landscape. *Agencies*

Farmers choose 'Kesar' mango for more profits

CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR, 8 JUNE

The area on which 'Kesar' variety of mango is grown has gone up by almost five times since 2022 in Maharashtra's Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar district, an agriculture official said on Sunday.

It has seen a rise of 2,741 hectares from 729 hectares in 2022-23 to 3,470 hectares in 2024-25 here, the official said, adding a similar trend was being observed in Jalna and Beed districts as well.

"Due to good yields and returns, farmers have turned towards Kesar mango plantation. The saplings grow and start giving fruits in just 4-5 years.

Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar is included in the Kesar cluster," district superintending agriculture officer Prakash Deshmukh said. *—PTI*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

India will back farmers in US trade talks: Min

NEW DELHI, 8 JUNE

- A NITI Aayog report 'Promoting India-US Agricultural Trade under the new US Trade Regime', the value for US agriculture and allied product exports to India was about USD 2.22 billion in the triennium ending 2024

The Central government will prioritise protecting farmers' interests while assessing potential gains and losses in the trade negotiations with the US over agricultural market access, Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said.

"Our priority is to protect the interest of our farmers... We will assess our gains and losses. Keeping that in mind, an agreement will be finalised," Chouhan was responding to a query on how India would safeguard farmers amid US pressure for greater market access for American agricultural and horticultural products.

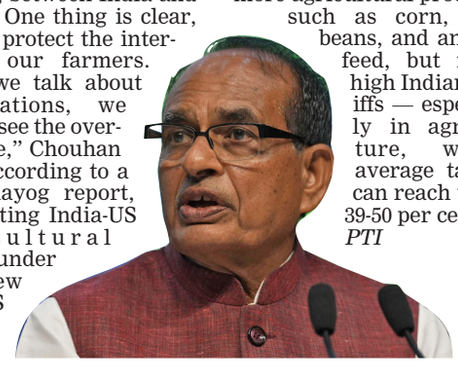
The negotiators are expected to agree on the broad contours of the first phase of the bilateral deal, expected by October 2025.

"The discussions are ongoing between India and the US. One thing is clear, we will protect the interest of our farmers. When we talk about two nations, we need to see the overall trade," Chouhan said. According to a NITI Aayog report, "Promoting India-US Agricultural Trade under the new US Trade Regime", the value for US agriculture and allied product exports to India was about USD 2.22 billion in the triennium ending 2024.

In the same period, India exported USD 5.75 billion worth of agricultural products to the US.

India's main agricultural exports to the US include frozen shrimp, basmati rice, spices, processed cereals, and other value-added products.

The US wants to export more agricultural products such as corn, soybeans, and animal feed, but faces high Indian tariffs — especially in agriculture, where average tariffs can reach up to 39-50 per cent. *—PTI*



9 of top-10 firms gain ₹1L cr in market value

NEW DELHI, 8 JUNE

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Nine of the top-10 most valued firms together added Rs 1,00,850.96 crore in market valuation last week, with Reliance Industries and HDFC Bank stealing the show with maximum gain, in line with an optimistic trend in equities. Last week, the BSE benchmark Sensex surged 737.98 points, or 0.90 per cent. From the top-10 pack, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) emerged as the only laggard, while Reliance Industries, HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, State Bank of India, Infosys, Life Insurance Corporation of India, Bajaj Finance, and Hindustan Unilever Ltd were the gainers.

The market valuation of Reliance Industries jumped Rs 30,786.38 crore to Rs 19,53,480.09 crore, the most among top-10 firms.

HDFC Bank's valuation surged Rs 26,668.23 crore to Rs 15,15,853.85 crore. Bajaj Finance added Rs 12,322.96 crore taking its valuation to Rs 5,82,469.45 crore. The market capitalisation (mcap) of ICICI Bank rallied Rs 9,790.87 crore to Rs 10,41,053.07 crore. Hindustan Unilever's mcap zoomed Rs 9,280.89 crore to Rs 5,61,282.11 crore.

The market valuation of Bharti Airtel climbed Rs 7,127.63 crore to Rs 10,65,894.55 crore and that of Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) advanced Rs 3,953.12 crore to Rs 6,07,073.28 crore.

Infosys added Rs 519.27 crore to its mcap, which stood at Rs 6,49,739.73 crore. State Bank of India's valuation went up Rs 401.61 crore to Rs 7,25,437.74 crore. However, the mcap of TCS dropped Rs 28,510.53 crore to Rs 12,24,975.89 crore.

In the top-10 chart, Reliance Industries remained the most-valued firm, followed by HDFC Bank, TCS, Bharti Airtel and ICICI Bank. *—PTI*

UP plans ₹125 crore flatted factory in Greater Noida

GREATER NOIDA, 8 JUNE

The Uttar Pradesh government has announced plans for a flatted factory in Greater Noida, with an investment of Rs 125 crore (approximately £12.5 million), aimed at bolstering the state's micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSME) sector and supporting its ambition to become a USD 1 trillion economy.

This initiative aligns with Uttar Pradesh's vision to establish itself as a key industrial hub, focusing on the development of MSMEs alongside heavy industries. The Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (YEIDA) has developed a comprehensive plan for the factory complex, set to be located in Sector 28 of Greater Noida, Gautam Buddha Nagar.

Flatted factories are multi-storey industrial buildings designed to accommodate various businesses, divided into smaller units for activities such as manufacturing, assembly, and storage.

Preparatory work, including the master plan and related reports, is currently underway, with construction slated to be completed within 24 months.

The factory complex is expected to offer fully equipped units with essential facilities, facilitating seamless production and operations. It is anticipated that the complex will significantly attract investments to the region, fostering local economic development and creating employment opportunities, particularly for young people. *—PTI*

EYES ON WORLD PEACE

China softens stance on rare-earth mineral export

BEIJING, 8 JUNE

China on Saturday approved some export license applications for rare earth-related metals – critical components used in manufacturing of automobiles, semiconductors, mobile phones and in a host of other industries.

The approval was granted considering rising global demand for medium and heavy rare earth elements driven by industries such as robotics and new energy vehicles, a spokesperson of the Ministry of Commerce here said.

Rare earth-related items have dual-use attributes for both military and civilian purposes, the spokesperson said, noting that imposing export controls on such items is in line with international practice.

The spokesperson said the controls aim to better safeguard national security and interests and fulfill international obligations of non-proliferation, which reflects China's commitment to "world peace and regional stability".

China will continue to strengthen the review of compliant applications and is ready to enhance communication and dialogue on export controls with relevant countries to facilitate compliant trade, the spokesperson said.

The announcement was regarded as significant as the US, EU, and India have been urging China to lift the restrictions amid growing concerns from industries facing shortages of these critical metals.

The shortages were so acute that Japan's Suzuki has stopped production of its Swift model, according to reports from Tokyo. It is not clear whether the approvals are applicable to India too.

The removal of restrictions was one of the prime issues that figured in Thursday's telephone talks between US President Donald Trump and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping.

"There should no longer be any questions respecting the complexity of Rare Earth products," Trump wrote on his Truth Social after his talks with Xi. India, too, has taken up the lifting of the restriction with China, following growing concerns among automobile manufacturers about the scarcity of rare earth magnets, which are critical components in electric vehicles (EVs) and even some parts of traditional internal combustion engine vehicles.

Also, China's export restrictions on rare earths, especially germanium – a critical mineral used in the manufacturing of semiconductors, fibre optic cables and solar panels – have sparked concerns in India among the respective industries. *—PTI*

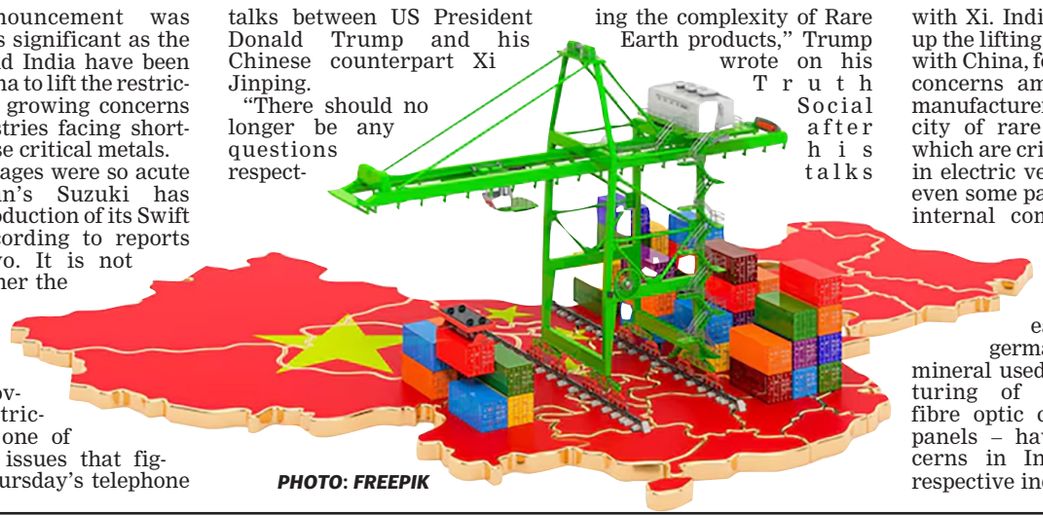


PHOTO: FREEPIK

PHOTO: X

Rohit, Pooja, win gold in Taiwan Open athletics

NEW DELHI, 8 JUNE

Three-time national champion Vithya Ramraj, Rohit Yadav, Pooja and Krishan won the gold medal in their respective events in an impressive outing by the Indian contingent on the second and final day of the Taiwan Open international athletics competition here on Sunday. Yashas rallied to win silver in the men's 400m hurdles with a personal best timing of 42.22s, the result giving a big boost to his confidence after missing out on the Asian Championships.

Vithya clocked 56.53s to strike gold in the women's 400m hurdles event, her third-best time of the year, helping the athlete to gain some useful ranking points for the upcoming World Championships.—*PTI*

PHOTO: X

Kusale, Elavenil return to lead India in Munich

NEW DELHI, 8 JUNE

Paris Olympics bronze medallist Swapnil Kusale will lead the Indian squad along with comeback shooter Elavenil Valarivan at the season's third ISSF World Cup, which will feature a galaxy of international stars, beginning in Munich from Tuesday.

Kusale fought his way back to the men's 50m rifle 3 positions (3P) event on the back of a good show on the domestic circuit. Two-time Olympian Elavenil will be seen in international action for the first time since Paris, although she did make the trip to Buenos Aires and Lima as an RPO (Ranking Points Only) shooter.

Reigning Asian Games champion Palak in the women's air pistol also makes it back to the team. —*PTI*

Nidhish sets up Spartans' win over Panthers

COIMBATORE, 8 JUNE

Nidhish Rajagopal made a fine fifty as SKM Salem Spartans defeated Siechem Madurai Panthers by six wickets in a Tamil Nadu Premier League (TNPL) match here on Sunday. The Spartans bowlers did well to restrict the Panthers to 164 for six in 20 overs, courtesy Tamil Nadu pacer M Mohammed's 2 for 27 off four overs. In reply, stylish left-hander Nidhish recorded his sixth TNPL fifty (60, 41b, 7x4, 2x6) and shared a third-wicket stand of 73 off 56 balls with R Kavin (48 not out, 39b, 1x4, 4x6) as Spartans made 167 for four with eight balls to spare. For the Panthers, IPL players Murugan Ashwin and Gurjapneet Singh took two wickets each. Brief scores: Siechem Madurai Panthers: 164/6 in 20 overs (R Ram Arvindh 37, Atheeq Ur Rahman 38.—*PTI*

Mumbai City FC signs Lalnuntluanga

MUMBAI, 8 JUNE

Indian Super League side Mumbai City FC confirmed the signing of Lalnuntluanga Bawitlung from Sreenidi Deccan FC on Sunday.The central midfielder has signed a three-year contract with the Islanders, keeping him at the club until the 2027-28 season.

The 25-year-old from Mizoram was a regular name in the starting lineup in the I-League over the last three seasons, making over 20 appearances each season for his former clubs Sreenidi and Real Kashmir."I am delighted to join Mumbai City. The history, legacy, and culture of this club speak for themselves, and I am looking forward to contributing to the same.—*PTI*

Marc wins Aragon Grand Prix

Marquez proved once again that he was the master of the circuit

NEW DELHI, 8 JUNE

Marquez celebrates on the podium after the MotoGP Aragon Grand Prix *PHOTO: X / @MARCMARQUEZ93*

Marc Marquez proved once again that he was the master of the circuit at MotorLand as the Ducati rider won the Aragon Grand Prix from pole to extend his lead in the championship on Sunday. Marquez's brother Alex finished second for Gresini Racing while Marc's teammate Francesco Bagnaia came third as Ducati bikes swept the podium.

Marc had completed the perfect weekend last year to win his first race in 1,043 days at the same circuit, and he repeated his feat as the polesitter and sprint winner claimed a record-extending seventh MotoGP victory at the track. Such was Marc's dominance this weekend that he became the first rider in 10 years to lead every session including warmups, practice, and qualifying since he did it himself at the German Grand Prix in 2015."It was an amazing weekend.

Leading all the practices, full focus, just full concentration," said Marquez, who now leads Alex by 32 points in the championship."As I expected, the others got closer and closer every session. In the race, the pace of Alex and Pecco (Bagnaia) was super fast, but it was consistent. (I was) just controlling the race distance. And the celebration, together with my brother, was amazing.

The best way to come back with full Ducatis at the top."The two Marquez brothers also danced arm-in-arm in front of the home fans sitting in a special stand dedicated to Spain's fastest brothers on two wheels.

Heading into the race weekend, the Marquez brothers had also been involved in social media banter over who their mother would support, and Marc had the last laugh when he handed her a red Ducati shirt at the winners' circle in the paddock.

Marc had broken the lap record to take his 99th career pole before claiming a seventh sprint victory of the season on Saturday, despite a poor start, but this time he shot off the line with a perfect launch to lead into turn one. —*PTI*

Winners Italy's Jasmine Paolini and Sara Errani celebrate with the trophy *PHOTO: X / @JASMINE_PAOLINI*

Errani and Paolini win women's doubles final

PARIS, 8 JUNE

Olympic gold medallists Sara Errani and Jasmine Paolini won the French Open women's doubles title for the first time.

The second-seeded Italian pair, runners-up at Roland-Garros last year, beat Anna Danilina and Aleksandra Krunic 6-4, 2-6, 6-1 on Sunday.

It was Errani's second French Open doubles title, and her sixth at a major tournament. The 38-year-old previously formed a highly successful partnership with Roberta Vinci, also winning trophies at the U.S. Open, Wimbledon, and Australian Open.

Errani won two titles in Paris this year, also claiming the mixed doubles title with Andrea Vavassori.

Paolini is also an accomplished singles player and was runner-up at the clay-court Grand Slam last year, losing to Iga Swiatek in the final. —*PTI*

Indian junior women's hockey team beats Belgium

ANTWERP, 8 JUNE

The Indian junior women's hockey team made a positive start to its tour of Europe with a 3-2 win over hosts Belgium here on Sunday.

India opened the scoring through Geeta Yadav (11th minute). However, in the second quarter, Belgium equalised through Marie Goenns (25th).Soon, Belgium took the lead as Louise van Hecke (34th) found the back of the net.

India made a valiant comeback and levelled the scores through Sonam (40th).The visitors continued to attack, and the tactic paid off as they won a penalty corner soon, which was converted by Lalthantluangi (45th). After that, the Indians did not let Belgium get the equaliser with some stout defending. —*PTI*

KHALEEL'S FIERY 4/70 HANDS INDIA A SLENDER FIRST-INNINGS LEAD

NORTHAMPTON, 8 JUNE

Left-arm pacer Khaleel Ahmed produced a penetrating spell of seam bowling, returning with figures of 4/70 as England Lions were bowled out for 327, handing India A a 21-run first-innings lead at tea on day three of the second unofficial Test, here on Sunday.

Resuming at 192/3, the hosts suffered a dramatic collapse in the morning session, losing four wickets for just 10 runs.

Khaleel set the tone, removing skipper James Rew (10) and George Hill (0) off successive deliveries to trigger the slide.

He followed it up with the wicket of Chris Woakes (5), caught behind, reducing the Lions to 266 for 8 by lunch.

After the interval, Nitish Kumar Reddy broke Farhan Ahmed's dogged resistance his 87-ball 24 frustrating the visitors -- to make it 279 for 9.

But from there India A struggled to break through with the final wicket stand between Josh Tongue and No. 11 Eddie Jack, frustrating the visitors.

Tongue remained unbeaten on a resolute 36 (61 balls), while 19-year-old Jack -- playing only his second first-class game displayed remarkable composure under pressure. —*PTI*

TENDULKAR ANDERSON TROPHY

Gill-led India begins training in England

LONDON, 8 JUNE

Shubman Gill and other teammates start training for the test matches against England *PHOTO: PTI*

India hit the ground running with a high-intensity training session at Lord's, ahead of the five-match series against England beginning June 20 at Leeds.

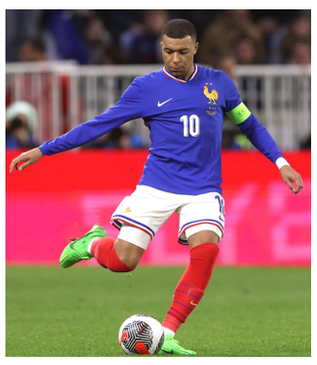
The pace quartet of Jasprit Bumrah, Prasidh Krishna, Mohammed Siraj, and Arshdeep Singh, alongside new captain Shubman Gill, Rishabh Pant, and all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja, trained under head coach Gautam Gambhir.

Gill was made India's 37th Test captain following the retirements of stalwarts Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli. He is leading a relatively young side eyeing their first Test series win in England since 2007.

The series begins at Headingley, followed by Tests at Edgbaston, Lord's, Old Trafford, and The Oval.

India A players, including some from the main squad, are already acclimatising in English conditions, currently involved in the second official Test against England Lions in Northampton. —*PTI*

Mbappe scores his 50th int'l goal



RIYADH, 8 JUNE

Kylian Mbappe scored his 50th goal for the France national team during its UEFA Nations League third-place match against Germany at the MPHArena on Sunday.

He is now one goal away from equalling Thierry Henry's record and sharing the second spot in France's all-time top scorers list. Olivier Giroud leads the list with 57 goals.

France had earlier been stopped from reaching the final of the Nations League by Spain, with the defending champion managing a 5-4 win.

After making his debut for the French national team back in 2017, Mbappe has gone on to make 90 appearances for Les Bleus. He was an integral part of the squad that won the FIFA World Cup in 2018 and the team that lifted the Nations League in 2021. —*PTI*

Lahiri leads by two, in sight of maiden LIV win

GAINESVILLE, 8 JUNE

Anirban Lahiri, who has never won on the LIV league and is also searching for his first worldwide win since 2015, put himself in the position once again as he shot 7-under 64 to move to 11-under and one shot ahead of the field in Virginia.

The 37-year-old Indian who plays for Crushers, which is led by Bryson DeChambeau, has shot 67-64 in the two rounds so far.Lahiri has four runner-up finishes without a win on LIV Golf, but now is in sight of a maiden win.

He made seven birdies without a bogey. Lahiri made a 39-foot par putt on the 16th hole to salvage his momentum and converted another superb par save on the 18th.

A trio of veterans, Graeme McDowell, Bubba Watson, and Martin Kaymer, also made their presence felt on the leaderboard heading into the final round.

At 9-under par, they find themselves just two shots behind Lahiri.McDowell has never finished better than T5 in any LIV Golf event.

Diksha stays within top 10 after third round

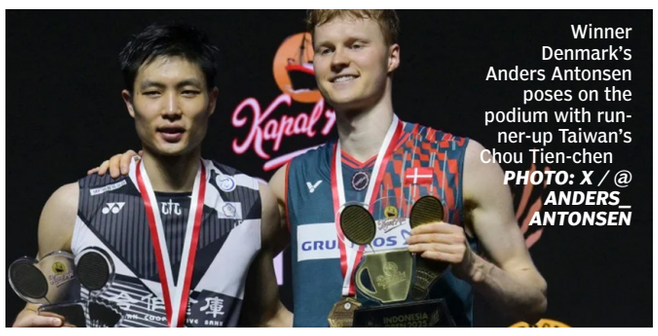
Indian golfer Diksha Dagar carded an even par 72 to hold her position within the top 10 after the third round of the Tenerife Women's Open at Abama Golf here.

Diksha was five-under for three days and is placed in sole 9th in the standings. She is three shots behind the leader, Sara Kouskova (69), at eighth-under.

The other Indian to make the cut in Tenerife, Avani Prashanth played an even par third round and is now placed at 43rd on the leaderboard. —*PTI*

INDONESIA OPEN: DENMARK'S ANTONSEN WINS FIRST CROWN

JAKARTA, 8 JUNE



Winner Denmark's Anders Antonsen poses on the podium with runner-up Taiwan's Chou Tien-chen *PHOTO: X / @ANDERS_ANTONSEN*

Badminton world number three Anders Antonsen clinched his first Indonesia Open title Sunday after beating Chou Tien-chen of Taiwan, while South Korea's An Se-young won her second championship in Jakarta.

The 28-year-old Dane sank world number seven Chou at the Indonesian capital's Istora Senayan arena, winning 22-20, 21-14 in a 60-minute match to secure the prestigious Super 1000 event.Antonsen came out on top in a tightly contested first game before cruising to victory in the second.

South Korea's An Se Young plays against China's Wang Zhiyi during their women's singles final match at the Indonesia Open badminton tournament.

In a more closely fought women's singles final, South Korean ace and world number one An fought back from one game down to beat China's Wang Zhi Yi in three games. She beat her Chinese rival 13-21, 21-19, 21-15 in 81 minutes.And, the 2024 Olympic gold medalist said she was "happy" to win another Indonesia Open title after securing her first in 2021.It was a weird game, a difficult game.

But fortunately, I can find my confidence and never gave up," An told reporters via an interpreter. —*PTI*

KAYLA SURVIVED SEX ABUSE TO WIN OLYMPIC GOLD

NEWARK, 8 JUNE

Around her neck or her waist, Kayla Harrison has a knack for winning gold.

She was victimized as a teen, revealing she even thought of quitting judo and of suicide. Harrison turned to her deep faith "I trust God" that has steadied her along the way, and she wrote a book about recognizing and overcoming trauma. One key distinction, of course, between the Olympics and professional mixed martial arts is what happens in the immediate aftermath of a monumental victory; there is no four-year wait for the next fight. —*PTI*

PRO LEAGUE

India needs to avoid conceding late goals

AMSTELVEEN, 8 JUNE

Indian men's hockey team will take on Netherlands *PHOTO: PTI*

The Indian men's hockey team will have to shed the habit of conceding late goals if it wishes to bounce back against the Netherlands and stay in contention for top spot in the FIH Pro League here Monday.

India dropped to fourth place in the Pro League standings after the 1-2 loss against the Netherlands on Saturday.

Netherlands are atop the leader-board with 17 points from nine games, followed by England (16 points from eight games), Belgium (16 points from eight games), and India (15 points from nine games).

The European leg of the Pro League holds greater significance for India. A top-place finish will help India directly qualify for next year's World Cup to be co-hosted by Belgium and the Netherlands.

If they fail, India will have another chance through the Asia Cup to be held in Rajgir, Bihar, from September 5 to 14 this year.

Against the Netherlands on Saturday, India squandered a one-goal lead to lose to Olympic champions Netherlands.

The Indian side showed promise in the early phases of the first half, with captain Harmanpreet Singh converting a penalty corner to give his side the lead.

The Dutch, however, made a strong comeback and ultimately emerged victorious courtesy of a brace from Thijs van Dam, which included the winning goal in the 58th minute. —*PTI*

NEYMAR TESTS COVID-19 POSITIVE

DUBAI, 8 JUNE

Brazil forward Neymar has tested COVID-19 positive and is currently undergoing treatment, his club Santos said in a statement on Saturday.

"With a viral condition that began on Thursday (June 5), Neymar Jr. underwent laboratory tests, after evaluation by the Medical Department of Santos FC, which confirmed infection by Covid-19," the club said in a statement. "The player had already been away from activities since Thursday, when he began showing symptoms, and remains resting at home and undergoing symptomatic treatment. —*PTI*